

PROCEEDINGS OF  
83<sup>d</sup> NATIONAL  
CONVENTION *of the*  
AMERICAN  
LEGION



San Antonio, Texas

August 28–30, 2001

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2001 : 83d NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION : 2001

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND AUDIT  
OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

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COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE  
COMMISSION, THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 83D ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS,  
FROM AUGUST 28, 29, AND 30, 2001, AS WELL AS A REPORT ON  
THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR PRECEDING  
THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 49



JANUARY 23, 2002.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and  
ordered to be printed

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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THE AMERICAN LEGION,  
*Washington, DC, January 10, 2002.*

Hon. DENNIS HASTERT,  
*Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In compliance with current public law we herewith transmit for printing as a House document a financial statement and independent audit of The American Legion, proceedings of our 83rd annual National Convention held in San Antonio, Texas from August 28, 29, and 30, 2001 and a report on our organization's activities for the year preceding the convention.

Sincerely,

STEVE A. ROBERTSON,  
*Director, National Legislative Commission.*



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## FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared for the information of members of The American Legion. It has come to be known as the Summary of Proceedings of the National Convention for the current year. It is a comprehensive resumé, in as small space as possible, of what took place at the Eighty-Third Annual National Convention in San Antonio, Texas, August 24-30, 2001.

The final report of the National Organization, for the period ending December 31, 2000, and Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2000 and Surplus Analysis, January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000 are included in the Summary.

To make a quick distribution, speed has been necessary. Every precaution has been taken to avoid errors, but some may have occurred in the rush of Convention events and the haste of editing and printing.

Permission is hereby given to quote from this Summary without further consent. However, because of the nature of our resolution process, I urge that the full text of any or all *resolve clause(s)* is used when a quotation from a resolution is required for publication.

Robert W. Spanogle  
National Adjutant

Note: At various times, the National Vice Commanders, as follows, presided over the Convention sessions, when called upon by presiding officer, in accordance with the Uniform Code of Procedure as shown in the verbatim proceedings: Charles C. Ragsdell, Arkansas; James E. Koutz, Indiana; Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts; John C. Pellegrini, Montana; William A. Weatherly, South Carolina.



**NATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND NATIONAL OFFICERS  
THE AMERICAN LEGION, 1919 to Date**

Note: In the following list it should be noted that the terms of each group of officers expire with that particular convention under which they are listed.

\* indicates deceased

**HONORARY COMMANDERS**

General John J. Pershing\*  
Marshall Ferdinand Foch\*

**PARIS CAUCUS**

Paris France, March 15 to 17, 1919

Temporary Chairman: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention)

Permanent Chairman: Bennett C. Clark\*, Missouri (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1926 National Convention)

Chairman Pro Tempore: Thomas W. Miller\*, Delaware (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1968 National Convention)

Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention)

At the Paris Caucus an Executive Committee was elected to complete arrangements, the chairman and secretary of which were:

Chairman: Milton J. Foreman\*, Illinois (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention)

Secretary: George A. White\*, Oregon

**ST. LOUIS CAUCUS**

St. Louis, Missouri, May 8 to 10, 1919

Temporary Chairman: Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. \*, New York (Voted title of Past National Commander at 1949 National Convention)

Permanent Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley\*, Texas

Vice Chairmen: John J. Sullivan\*, Washington; Fred Humphrey\*, New Mexico; P.C. Calhoun\*, Connecticut (Voted titles of Past National Vice Commanders at 1933 National Convention)

Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania

Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles\*, Colorado (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention)

**1st NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 10 to 12, 1919

Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley\*, Texas (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1919 National Convention)

Vice Chairman: Bennett C. Clark\*, Missouri

Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania

Treasurer: Gasper G. Bacon\*, Massachusetts

Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles\*, Colorado

**2nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Cleveland, Ohio, September 27 to 29, 1920

Commander: Franklin D'Olier\*, Pennsylvania

Vice Commanders: James O'Brien\*, California; Allan A. Tukey\*,  
Nebraska; Joyce S. Lewis\*, Minnesota; Alden B. Chambers\*, Massachusetts; William  
Follett\*, Oregon

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Chaplain: Rev. Francis A. Kelly\*, New York

Judge: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

**3rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Kansas City, Missouri, October 31 to November 2, 1921

Commander: Frederic W. Galbraith, Jr. \*, (died June 9), succeeded by John G. Emery\*,  
Michigan

Vice Commanders: John G. Emery\*, Michigan; Thomas Goldingay\*, New Jersey;  
Claudius G. Pendill\*, Wisconsin; James G. Scrugham\*, Nevada; E. Jackson Winslett\*,  
Alabama

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. John W. Inzer\*, Tennessee

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

**4th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, October 16 to 20, 1922

Commander: Hanford MacNider\*, Iowa

Vice Commanders: H. Nelson Jackson\*, Vermont; George L. Berry\*, Tennessee;  
Raymond O. Brackett\*, Massachusetts; Charles H. Kendrick\*, California; John A.  
McCormack\*, Colorado

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Earl A. Blackman\*, Kansas

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

**5th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

San Francisco, California, October 16 to 19, 1923

Commander: Alvin M. Owsley\*, Texas

Vice Commanders: Edward J. Barrett\*, Wisconsin; Watson B. Miller\*, District of  
Columbia; E. Erle Cocke, Sr. \*, Georgia; Robert O. Blood\*, New Hampshire; Chiles P.  
Plummer\*, Wyoming

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. William P. O'Connor\*, Ohio

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana



## XI

### 6th NATIONAL CONVENTION

St. Paul, Minnesota, September 15 to 19, 1924

Commander: John R. Quinn\*, California

Vice Commanders: Lester F. Albert\*, Idaho; Celora M. Stoddard\*, Arizona; William B. Healey\*, Pennsylvania; F. Ryan Duffy\*, Wisconsin; Dr. I. Thurman Mann\*, North Carolina

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington  
Cresigned 2-1-24; Succeeded by Russell G. Creviston\*, Indiana

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Ezra Clemens\*, Minnesota

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

### 7th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Omaha, Nebraska, October 5 to 9, 1925

Commander: James A. Drain\*, Washington

Vice Commanders: Frank H. McFarland\*, Kansas; Eugene P. Armstrong\*, Connecticut; A.L. Perry, Panama; Peyton H. Hoge, Jr\*, Kentucky; William Stern\*, North Dakota

Adjutant: Russell G. Creviston\*, Indiana  
Resigned  
Succeeded by James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Joseph M. Lonergan\*, Illinois

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

### 8th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 11 to 15, 1926

Commander: John R. McQuigg\*, Ohio

Vice Commanders: Joseph Y. Cheney\*, Florida; Hughes B. Davis\*, Oklahoma; Vincent A. Carroll\*, Pennsylvania; Raymond B. Littlefield\*, Rhode Island; Judge James A. Howell\*, Utah

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. William E. Patrick\*, California

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

### 9th NATIONAL CONVENTION

New York, New York, October 18, 1927

Paris, France, September 19 to 22, 1927

Commander: Howard P. Savage\*, Illinois

Vice Commanders: C. Thomas Busha, Jr. \*, Montana; Stafford King\*, Minnesota; John G. Sims\*, Tennessee; John E. Curtis\*, Nebraska; Dr. John G. Towne\*, Maine.

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Joseph L.N. Wolfe\*, Pennsylvania

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

## XII

### 10th NATIONAL CONVENTION

San Antonio, Texas, October 8 to 11, 1928

Commander: Edward E. Spafford\*, New York

Vice Commanders: John T. Raftis\*, Washington; Ralph T. O'Neil\*, Kansas; Paul R. Younts\*, North Carolina; Dan Spurlock\*, Louisiana; John M. Henry\*, Minnesota.

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Chaplain: Rev. Gill Robb Wilson\*, New Jersey

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Treasurer: Bowman Elder\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas\*, Illinois

### 11th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Louisville, Kentucky, September 30 to October 2, 1929

Commander: Paul V. McNutt\*, Indiana

Vice Commanders: Lawrence E. McGann, Jr. \*, Illinois; George W. Malone\*, Nevada; Edward L. White\*, Connecticut; Miller C. Foster\*, South Carolina; Walton D. Hood\*, Texas

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Chaplain: Rabbi Lee J. Levinger\*, Delaware

Treasurer: Bowman Elder\*, Indiana

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas\*, Illinois

### 12th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Boston, Massachusetts, October 6 to 9, 1930

Commander: O.L. Bodenhamer\*, Arkansas

Vice Commanders: Milt D. Campbell\*, Ohio; John J. Dugan\*, Delaware; Morton M. David\*, Colorado; Frank Schoble, Jr. \*, Pennsylvania; Willis M. Brewer\*, Michigan.

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Chaplain: Rev. George F. Kettell, D.D. \*, New York

Treasurer: Bowman Elder\*, Indiana

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas\*, Illinois

### 13th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Detroit, Michigan, September 21 to 24, 1931

Commander: Ralph T. O'Neil\*, Kansas

Vice Commanders: Bert S. Hyland\*, Vermont; Roland B. Howell\*, Louisiana; Harry B. Henderson, Jr. \*, Wyoming; Dr. James A. Duff\*, West Virginia; Dr. Neal D. Williams\*, Missouri

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Chaplain: Rev. Joseph N. Barnett\*, Wisconsin

Treasurer: Bowman Elder\*, Indiana

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas\*, Illinois to 6-24-31CSucceeded by Acting Judge

Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana

### XIII

#### 14th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Portland, Oregon, September 12 to 15, 1932

Commander: Henry L. Stevens, Jr. \*, North Carolina

Vice Commanders: Richard F. Paul\*, Massachusetts; Forrest G. Cooper\*, Mississippi;  
Roy L. Cook\*, New Mexico; Frank N. Brooks\*, Washington; Harold L. Plummer\*,  
Wisconsin

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa

Chaplain: Rev. Harris A. Darche\*, Illinois

Treasurer: Bowman Elder\*, Indiana

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts

Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham\*, Indiana

#### 15th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Chicago, Illinois, October 2 to 5, 1933

Commander: Louis A. Johnson\*, West Virginia

Vice Commanders: Russell Meadows\*, Arizona; Robert D. Flory\*, Nebraska; William E.  
Easterwood, Jr. \*, Texas; John J. Maloney\*, Maine; Chas. A. Mills\*, Florida

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Irwin Q. Wood\*, Idaho

Treasurer: Bowman Elder\*, Indiana

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts (died January 22, 1933)CSucceeded by Thomas  
M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham\*, Indiana

#### 16th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Miami, Florida, October 22 to 25, 1934

Commander: Edward A. Hayes\*, Illinois

Vice Commanders: Charles R. Mabey\*, Utah; Robert L. Gordon\*, Arkansas; Miguel  
Munoz\*, Puerto Rico; Ed W. Carruth\*, Kansas; Charles L. Woolley\*, Rhode Island.

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. White\*, Massachusetts

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham\*, Indiana

#### 17th NATIONAL CONVENTION

St. Louis, Missouri, September 23 to 26, 1935

Commander: Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. \*, California

Vice Commanders: Daniel J. Doherty\*, Massachusetts; Harold J. Warner\*, Oregon; John  
K. Kennelly\*, North Dakota; Milo J. Warner\*, Ohio; Quimby Melton\*, Georgia

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Dr. Park W. Huntington\*, Delaware

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: James A. Drain\*, Washington

Judge Advocate: James A. Drain\*, Washington

## XIV

### 18th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Cleveland, Ohio, September 21 to 24, 1936

Commander: Ray Murphy\*, Iowa

Vice Commanders: Raymond F. Gates\*, Connecticut; Dr. W.E. Whitlock\*, Florida;  
Oscar W. Worthwine\*, Idaho; Dr. F. Whitney Godwin\*, Virginia; Louis R. Probst\*,  
Wyoming

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas D. Kennedy\*, Missouri

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

### 19th NATIONAL CONVENTION

New York, New York, September 20 to 23, 1937

Commander: Harry W. Colmery\*, Kansas

Vice Commanders: Salvatore A. Capodice\*, California; Leo A. Temmey\*, South Dakota;  
Leonard Sisk\*, Tennessee; J. Fred Johnson, Jr. \*, Alabama; Jack Crowley\*, Vermont

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Bryan H. Keathley, D.D.\*, Texas

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

### 20th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Los Angeles, California, September 19 to 22, 1938

Commander: Daniel J. Doherty\*, Massachusetts

Vice Commanders: Drury M. Phillips\*, Texas; Phil M. Conley\*, West Virginia; Harry  
M. Johnson\*, Montana; James F. Daniel,  
Jr. \*, South Carolina; James R. Mahaffy\*, Hawaii

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Frank J. Lawler\*, Illinois

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

### 21st NATIONAL CONVENTION

Chicago, Illinois, September 25 to 28, 1939

Commander: Stephen F. Chadwick\*, Washington

Vice Commanders: Edward J. Quinn\*, Maine; Charles W. Crush\*, Virginia; Earl T.  
Ross\*, Nevada; James T. Crawley\*, Mississippi; Henry C. Oakey\*, Wisconsin

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Jerome L. Fritsche\*, Nebraska

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**22nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Boston, Massachusetts, September 23 to 26, 1940

Commander: Raymond J. Kelly\*, Michigan

Vice Commanders: Leo E. Ray\*, New Hampshire; Charles Q. Kelly\*, Arkansas;  
Matthew J. Murphy\*, Illinois; James B. Fitzgerald\*, Maryland; H. Elwyn Davis\*,  
Colorado

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Patrick N. McDermott\*, Iowa

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**23rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 15 to 18, 1941

Commander: Milo J. Warner\*, Ohio

Vice Commanders: Erwin A. Froyd\*, Wyoming; James L. McCrory\*, Nebraska; Harold  
P. Redden\*, Massachusetts; Edward R. Stirling\*, Pennsylvania; Alcee S. Legendre\*,  
Louisiana

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Brigadier William G. Gilks\*, Texas

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**24th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Kansas City, Missouri, September 19 to 21, 1942

Commander: Lynn U. Stambaugh\*, North Dakota

Vice Commanders: W.C. Sawyer\*, Arizona; William DeLacy Allen\*, Georgia; Charles  
E. Booth\*, West Virginia; V.M. Armstrong\*, Indiana; John F. Sullivan\*, Vermont

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas

Chaplain: Rev. Frederick J. Halloran\*, New Jersey

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**25th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Omaha, Nebraska, September 21 to 23, 1943

Commander: Roane Waring\*, Tennessee

Vice Commanders: John T. Batten\*, Alabama; Arthur J. Connell\*, Connecticut; Fred G.  
Fraser\*, District of Columbia; Herman H. Lark\*, Missouri; Jefferson Davis Atwood\*,  
New Mexico

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas, (died July 25)CSucceeded by Donald G. Glascoff\*,  
Michigan, Acting Adjutant

Chaplain: Dr. Paul De Forrest Mortimore\*, Idaho

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

XVI

**26th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Chicago, Illinois, September 18 to 20, 1944

Commander: Warren H. Atherton\*, California

Vice Commanders: Martin V. Coffey\*, Ohio; E.A. Littlefield\*, Utah; Robert 'Roy' McMillan\*, North Carolina; Edward Al Mulrooney, Delaware; Hector G. Staples\*, Maine

Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff\*, Michigan

Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John F. McManus\*, Kansas

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**27th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Chicago, Illinois, November 18 to 21, 1945

Commander: Edward N. Scheiberling\*, New York

Vice Commanders: Bascom F. Jones\*, Tennessee; Frank E. McCaffrey\*, Rhode Island; Dan M. McDade\*, Oregon; Ray S. Pierson\*, Kansas; William P. Shadoan\*, Kentucky.

Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff\*, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. DeWitt C. Mallory\*, Florida

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**28th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

San Francisco, California, September 30 to October 4, 1946

Commander: John Stelle \*, Illinois

Vice Commanders: R. Graham Huntington\*, New Jersey; Fred LaBoon\*, Oklahoma; Sam L. Latimer, Jr. \*, South Carolina; H. Dudley Swim\*, Idaho; Jeremiah Twomey\*, Massachusetts

Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff\*, Michigan

Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward J. Smith\*, Iowa.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: John R. Ruddick\*, Indiana, (died 7-13-45)CSucceeded by Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**29th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New York, New York, August 28 to 31, 1947

Commander: Paul H. Griffith\*, Pennsylvania

Vice Commanders: Joseph W. Brown\*, New Hampshire; Martin B. Buckner\*, Michigan; Richard C. Cadwallader\*, Louisiana; Ernest H. Dervishian\*, Virginia; Edward J. Sharkey\*, California

Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff\*, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Arthur L. Rustad\*, Minnesota

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

XVII

**30th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami Florida, October 18 to 20, 1948

Commander: James F. O'Neil\*, New Hampshire

Vice Commanders: LeRoy William Barns\*, South Dakota; Albert A. Cree\*, Vermont;  
Richard B. Ott\*, Washington; Myron R. Renick\*, West Virginia; Joe W. White\*,  
Georgia

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Frank L. Harrington\*, Montana

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**31st NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 29 to September 1, 1949

Commander: S. Perry Brown\*, Texas

Vice Commanders: James Lane, Alabama; Leonard W. Moody\*, Arkansas; James  
Annin\*, Montana; Walter E. Alessandroni\*, Pennsylvania; Edward J. Kelly\*,  
Connecticut

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Rev. Thomas Grice\*, California

Historian: Monte C. Sandlin\*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**32nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Los Angeles, California, October 9 to 12, 1950

Commander: George N. Craig\*, Indiana

Vice Commanders: Milton G. Boock\*, Minnesota; David H. Fleisher\*, Missouri; Frank  
E. Lowe\*, Maine; J. E. Martie\*, Nevada; Dr. D. R. Perry\*, North Carolina

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Edward J. Carney\*, O.S.A., Massachusetts

Historian: Monte C. Sandlin\*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**33rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami, Florida, October 15 to 18, 1951

Commander: Erle Cocke, Jr. \*, Georgia

Vice Commanders: Joe H. Adams\*, Florida; Herbert J. Jacobi\*, District of Columbia;  
Felix Pogliano\*, Colorado; Lewis K. Gough\*, California; Fred C. Bramlage\*, Kansas.

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Rabbi David Lefkowitz\*, Louisiana

Historian: Monte C. Sandlin\*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

XVIII

**34th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New York, New York, August 25 to 28, 1952

Commander: Donald R. Wilson\*, West Virginia

Vice Commanders: Adolph F. Bremer\*, Minnesota; Frank R. Kelley\*, Massachusetts;  
Thomas E. Paradine\*, New York; Oscar B. Rohiff\*, Wyoming; Audley H. Ward\*, South  
Carolina

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Rev. Olaf G. Birkeland\*, Wisconsin

Historian: Monte C. Sandlin\*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**35th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

St. Louis, Missouri, August 31 to September 3, 1953

Commander: Lewis K. Gough\*, California

Vice Commanders: William R. Bourdon\*, Arizona; Lyon W. Brandon\*, Mississippi;  
Wilbur C. Daniel\*, Virginia; Harry V. Groome\*, New Jersey; J. Addington Wagner,  
Michigan

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John E. Duffy\*, Ohio

Historian: Monte C. Sandlin\*, Alabama

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**36th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 2, 1954

Commander: Arthur J. Connell\*, Connecticut

Vice Commanders: John A. High\*, New Hampshire; Dr. Deward H. Reed\*, New  
Mexico; Truman C. Wold\*, North Dakota; Thomas W. Bird\*, North Carolina, Herbert  
M. Walker\*, Pennsylvania

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Dr. Tom B. Clark\*, Oklahoma

Historian: Robert T. Fairey\*, South Carolina

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**37th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami, Florida, October 10 to 13, 1955

Commander: Seaborn P. Collins\*, New Mexico

Vice Commanders: Leonard L. Jackson\*, Louisiana; Patrick H. Mangan\*, Jr., Vermont;  
Howard C. Kingdom\*, Ohio; Dr. Carl J. Rees\*, Delaware; Robert L. Shelby\*, Utah.

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska

Chaplain: Rev. Albert J. Hoffman\*, Iowa

Historian: Robert T. Fairey\*, South Carolina

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana



## XIX

### 38th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Los Angeles, California, September 3 to 6, 1956

Commander: J. Addington Wagner, Michigan

Vice Commanders: Guy Stone\*, Georgia; John H. Van Horn\*, Alaska; L. Everett Page\*, Texas; Gilman H. Stordock\*, Wisconsin; James V. Day\*, Maine (resigned Jan. 1, 1956), succeeded by William J. Holliman\*, District of Columbia

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska (resigned), succeeded by E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Joseph MacCarroll\*, New Jersey

Historian: Robert T. Fahey\*, South Carolina

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

### 39th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 16 to 19, 1957

Commander: W.C. 'Dan' Daniel\*, Virginia

Vice Commanders: Gaylor M. Brown\*, Iowa; George T. Lewis\*, Jr., Tennessee; Carl R. Moser\*, Oregon; John E. Stay, Pennsylvania; J. Edward Walter\*, Maryland

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Bernard W. Gerdon, Indiana

Historian: Robert T. Fahey\*, South Carolina

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

### 40th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Chicago, Illinois, September 1 to 4, 1958

Commander: John S. Gleason, Jr.\*, Illinois

Vice Commanders: William A. Cottrell\*, Hawaii; Ramon R. Guas\*, Puerto Rico; Harry W. Miller\*, West Virginia; Leo A. Lemos\*, Rhode Island; Isadore E. Levine\*, Indiana.

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Feltham S. James\*, South Carolina

Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert\*, New Jersey

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

### 41st NATIONAL CONVENTION

Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24 to 27, 1959

Commander: Preston J. Moore, Oklahoma

Vice Commanders: C. D. DeLoach, District of Columbia; John W. Collins\*, Pennsylvania; James B. Kerrigan\*, Missouri; Robert Charles Smith\*, Louisiana; James C. Bangs\*, Idaho

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Twiss\*, Massachusetts

Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert\*, New Jersey

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana

**42nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami Beach, Florida, October 15 to 20, 1960

Commander: Martin B. McKneally\*, New York

Vice Commanders: William A. Brennan, Jr., Indiana; A. Layman Harman\*, South Carolina; Nate V. Keller\*, Minnesota; Irven Frank Gianotti\*, Minnesota (appointed September 14, 1960, to fill vacancy created July 25 by the death of Nate V. Keller); Willard W. Brandt, North Dakota; Charles McGonegal\*, California; Corydon T. Hill\*, California (appointed May 4, 1960, to fill vacancy created January 27 by the death of Charles McGonegal)

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, D.H.L., Texas

Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert\*, New Jersey

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**43rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Denver, Colorado, September 9 to 14, 1961

Commander: William R. Burke, California

Vice Commanders: George K. Walker, Massachusetts; James M. Wagonseller, Ohio; Vincent J. Maxheim\*, Iowa; Dr. Harry H. Kretzler\*, Washington; R.C. Godwin\*, North Carolina

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. William H. Moss\*, Tennessee

Historian: Glenn B. Hoover\*, Iowa

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**44th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Las Vegas, Nevada, October 5 to 11, 1962

Commander: Charles L. Bacon\*, Missouri

Vice Commanders: Walter W. Barnard\*, Montana; Edward T. Hoak\*, Pennsylvania; Wilson H. Morrison\*, Michigan; J. Milton Patrick\*, Oklahoma; Edward Wysocki, New Jersey

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Robert G. Keating\*, Connecticut

Historian: Earl David Young\*, Colorado

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**45th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami Beach, Florida, September 6 to 12, 1963

Commander: James E. Powers\*, Georgia

Vice Commanders: Harold D. Beaton\*, District of Columbia; James W. Doon\*, New Hampshire; Claude A. Hamilton\*, South Dakota; Paschal C. Reese\*, Florida; Victor F. Whittlesea\*, Nevada

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rabbi Albert M. Shulman\*, Indiana

Historian: H. Armand de Masi\*, Italy

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**46th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Dallas, Texas, September 18 to 24, 1964

Commander: Daniel F. Foley, Minnesota

Vice Commanders: Earl D. Franklin, Jr.,\* Colorado; Emilio S. Iglesias\*, Vermont; Garland D. Murphy, Jr. \*, M.D., Arkansas; George Emory Sipple\*, Wisconsin; Harry Wright\*, Mexico

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John J. Howard\*, Virginia

Historian: H. Armand de Masi\*, Italy

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**47th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Portland, Oregon, August 20 to 26, 1965

Commander: Donald E. Johnson\*, Iowa

Vice Commanders: David Aronberg\*, Kentucky; Herbert D. Black\*, South Carolina; Ward W. Husted\*, Wyoming; Edward H. Lynch, Jr.\*, Connecticut; Joseph Paul\*, Michigan

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Morris N. Dummet\*, Louisiana

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**48th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 1, 1966

Commander: L. Eldon James\*, Virginia

Vice Commanders: Dr. A.R. Choppin\*, Louisiana; William E. Galbraith, Nebraska; Robert O. Phillips\*, Philippines; William J. Rogers, Maine; Soleng Tom, \* Arizona.  
Adjutant: E. A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming (died 4-21-67)CSucceeded by Ernest N. Schmid  
5-4-67 to 8-31-67

Chaplain: Rev. Alfred C. Thompson, New York

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

XXII

**49th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Boston, Massachusetts, August 25 to 31, 1967

Commander: John E. Davis\*, North Dakota

Vice Commanders: Robert M. Fritz\*, Indiana; Lewis W. Emerich, Texas; Harry V. Klein\*, Pennsylvania; Frank L. Orfanello\*, Massachusetts; James A. Tadlock\*, New Mexico

Adjutant: William F. Hauck, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Anthony J. O'Driscoll\*, New York

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**50th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, September 6 to 12, 1968

Commander: William E. Galbraith, Nebraska

Vice Commanders: Coleman Nolen\*, Oklahoma; Louis R.J. Malo, Rhode Island; Roscoe D. Curtiss\*, Tennessee; Dr. Edwin L. Peterson, Utah; Marvin W. Roth, Wisconsin.

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Edward P. Nolan\*, Pennsylvania

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**51st NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Atlanta, Georgia, August 22 to 28, 1969

Commander: William C. Doyle\*, New Jersey

Vice Commanders: C. Russell Huber\*, Alaska; John A. Jones\*, West Virginia; Howard E. Lohman\*, Minnesota; Lewis E. McCray\*, Alabama; Maurice Parisien\*, Maine.

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. C.J. Olander\*, Mississippi

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**52nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Portland, Oregon, August 28 to September 3, 1970

Commander: J. Milton Patrick\*, Oklahoma

Vice Commanders: Kent T. Lundgren\*, Michigan; Roland D. Marble, Mississippi; Raymond F. Mudge\*, New Hampshire; Earl R. Norgard\*, Oregon; Gilberto M. Font\*, Puerto Rico

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. William D. Curtis, Minnesota

Historian: John A. May\*, South Carolina

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

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**53rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Houston, Texas, August 27 to September 2, 1971

Commander: Alfred P. Chamie\*, California

Vice Commanders: Claude Carpenter, Arkansas; Max Hanson\*, Idaho; Robert E.L. Eaton\*, Maryland; Gabriel T. Olga\*, Massachusetts; John E. Gilbert, Pennsylvania

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Milton B. Faust\*, North Carolina

Historian: Howard M. Swinney\*, Kentucky

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**54th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Chicago, Illinois, August 18 to 24, 1972

Commander: John H. Geiger, Illinois

Vice Commanders: Howard W. Fann\*, Kentucky; Arthur M. MacCarthy\*, Florida; Roy Sweet, Vermont; Harry G. Wiles\*, Kansas; Wallace C.S. Young, Hawaii

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Paul J. Schwaab\*, Nebraska

Historian: G. Greer McCallister\*, Ohio

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**55th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Honolulu, Hawaii, August 17 to 23, 1973

Commander: Joe L. Matthews, Texas

Vice Commanders: Tim T. Craig\*, North Carolina; Sam Gray\*, California; Donald L. Gruenbaum\*, Ohio; Albert J. Moeller\*, New Jersey; Raymond J. Novak\*, South Dakota.

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. L.P. Fitzpatrick\*, Iowa

Historian: Mrs. Loretta O. Phillips\*, California

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**56th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami Beach, Florida, August 16 to 22, 1974

Commander: Robert E. L. Eaton\*, Maryland

Vice Commanders: John N. Roberto, Connecticut; Frank C. Brooks\*, Washington; Gilbert E. Sheeks, Indiana; Merrick W. Swords Jr. \*, Louisiana; N.E. Brown\*, South Carolina

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Jerome D. Fortenberry, Missouri

Historian: R. Robert Filter\*, Wisconsin

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

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**57th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 15 to 21, 1975

Commander: James M. Wagonseller\*, Ohio

Vice Commanders: Boyd H. Clemens, North Dakota; Jack W. Flynt\*, Texas; Jay E. Harville, Tennessee; Donald H. Jeffery, Pennsylvania; William A. Lindsay\*, Montana.

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Harvey T. Goodling\*, Oregon

Historian: Nolie C. Deas, Sr., Florida

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**58th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Seattle, Washington, August 20 to 26, 1976

Commander: Harry G. Wiles\*, Kansas

Vice Commanders: John W. Adams, Jr., Kentucky; Fred W. Anderson, Jr., Nevada; Leo F. Malloy, Massachusetts; Thomas W. Miller, Arkansas; James F. Walker\*, Minnesota.

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Claude E. Smithmier, Georgia

Historian: Mrs. Dorothy Grimes, Colorado

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**59th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Denver, Colorado, August 19 to 25, 1977

Commander: William J. Rogers, Maine

Vice Commanders: Lloyd J. Berken\*, Wisconsin; Thomas B. Coll, District of Columbia; Robert B. Graubeger\*, Colorado; Frank A. Kelly, Georgia; Wilbur Walker\*, Virginia

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. James C. Tuxbury, North Dakota

Historian: Alton H. Carpenter, New York

Treasurer: William Francis Polen\*, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**60th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, August 18 to 24, 1978

Commander: Robert Charles Smith\*, Louisiana

Vice Commanders: Eugene V. Lindquist, Minnesota; Roger A. Munson\*, Ohio; John J. O'Connell\*, Rhode Island; Chester Phillips, West Virginia; Irving B. Selmer\*, Wyoming

Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen\*, Minnesota

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Walter D. Power\*, Maryland

Historian: Arnold J. Stockstad\*, North Dakota

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**61st NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Houston, Texas, August 17 to 23, 1979

Commander: John M. Carey, Michigan

Vice Commanders: L. Max Connolly\*, Arizona; Alvin F. Grauerholz, Kansas; Joseph F. Ward\*, New Jersey; John H. Wienand, Jr. \*, Alabama; Nathan M. Wolfe, South Carolina

Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen\*, Minnesota

Chaplain: R. Drew Wolcott\*, Mexico

Historian: Harry H. Kretzler, M.D. \*, Washington

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**62nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Boston, Massachusetts, August 15 to 21, 1980

Commander: Frank I. Hamilton, Indiana

Vice Commanders: G.Y. Fails\*, New Mexico; Keith A. Kreul, Wisconsin; Bob Legan, Arkansas; Max E. Robinson, North Carolina; Lawrence R. Spaulding\*, New Hampshire.

Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen\*, Minnesota

Chaplain: Rev. Karl E. Kniseley, California

Historian: Phillip Haddad, Oklahoma

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**63rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Honolulu, Hawaii, August 28 to September 3, 1981

Commander: Michael J. Kogutek, New York

Vice Commanders: Ralph M. Godwin\*, Mississippi; Keith H. Gwilliam, Utah; Matthew W. Jamieson\*, Michigan; Robert W. Lowry, Nebraska; Dr. Almo J. Sebastianelli, Pennsylvania

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. George S. Macres\*, Minnesota

Historian: Neal S. Sundeen, Arizona

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**64th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Chicago, Illinois, August 20 to 26, 1982

Commander: Jack W. Flynt\*, Texas

Vice Commanders: Frank T. Markovich\*, Missouri; Dan C. McDonough\*, Alaska; Percy C. Miller, Tennessee; Melvin 'Doc' Simon, Vermont; David A. Wade\*, Maryland.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. George R. M. Rumney, Virginia

Historian: Bernard J. Chisholm\*, Minnesota

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

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**65th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Seattle, Washington, August 19 to 25, 1983

Commander: Al Keller, Jr.\*, Illinois

Vice Commanders: Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota; Margaret M. Malone, New Jersey; H. Melvin Napier, Indiana; Jack C. Plato\*, Oregon; Leo O. Walker\*, Oklahoma.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John D. Kempf\*, Ohio

Historian: James W. Conway, Massachusetts

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York

**66th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Salt Lake City, Utah, September 3 to 5, 1984

Commander: Keith Kreul, Wisconsin

Vice Commanders: J. Leslie Brown, Jr.,\* Kentucky; Roberto Gonzalez, Puerto Rico; Charles R. Green\*, Ohio; Robert W. Groccia, Massachusetts, John N. Lockhart\*, Hawaii

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: James Clay McKee, Utah

Historian: Herberta T. Stark\*, New Hampshire

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

**67th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, August 23 to 28, 1985

Commander: Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland

Vice Commanders: Robert S. Turner, Georgia; Harold E. Collett\*, Idaho; Ronald D. Birk, Kansas; Stewart Kunde\*, Minnesota; Stephen J. Mikosky\*, Pennsylvania

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Charles G. Rice, Jr.\*, New York

Historian: Roy B. Mahoney, Florida

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

**68th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Cincinnati, Ohio, August 29 to September 4, 1986

Commander: Dale L. Renaud\*, Iowa

Vice Commanders: Bernard Black, South Carolina; Norman Conn\*, California; Vito M. DeFilipp, Maine; Miles S. Epling, West Virginia, H. F. 'Sparky' Gierke, North Dakota

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Dr. Gordon L. Patterson,\* Nebraska

Historian: Ethel M. Matuschka,\* Wisconsin

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland



## XXVII

### 69th NATIONAL CONVENTION

San Antonio, Texas, August 21 to 27, 1987

Commander: James P. Dean, Mississippi

Vice Commanders: William M. Detweiler, Louisiana; Doris R. Gross, Washington;  
Donald E. Neil, Delaware; Allen L. Titus, Indiana; Ervin F. Van Dyke, Wisconsin

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Arthur J. Jakobiak, New Mexico

Historian: J. Ruffin Apperson\*, Virginia

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

### 70th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Louisville, Kentucky, September 6 to 8, 1988

Commander: John P. 'Jake' Comer, Massachusetts

Vice Commanders: Neale V. Cabral\*, Connecticut; Joe Frank, Jr., Missouri; W.P. 'Bill'  
Peterson, Montana; Paul B. Phifer, Jr.,\* Virginia; Leon Reed, Arkansas

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Jerry Salveson\*, Minnesota

Historian: Edward F. Brennan\*, Illinois

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

### 71st NATIONAL CONVENTION

Baltimore, Maryland, September 5 to 7, 1989

Commander: H.F. 'Sparky' Gierke, North Dakota

Vice Commanders; Thomas L. Gabel, Ohio; Harvey Holcomb, Texas; Archie Pozzi, Jr.,\*  
Nevada; Ray G. Smith, Sr., North Carolina; John P. Tipping, New York

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. F. Robert Davidson, Michigan

Historian: Richard A. Stevens, Sr.\*, Louisiana

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

### 72nd NATIONAL CONVENTION

Indianapolis, Indiana, August 28 to 30, 1990

Commander: Miles S. Epling, West Virginia

Vice Commanders: Vincent E. Blank, Iowa; Joseph E. Caouette, New Hampshire;  
Andrew J. Cooper, Alabama; Gerald Goetzinger, South Dakota; Vinton R. Guy,  
Colorado

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Lynn S. Kearsley, Idaho

Historian: C. Carl Pilgrim,\* South Carolina

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

## XXVIII

### **73rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Phoenix, Arizona, September 3 to 5, 1991

Commander: Robert S. Turner, Georgia

Vice Commanders: Lewis Adams, Nebraska; James T. Anderson, Wyoming; Fred M. Ingellis, Mississippi; Harry F. McDowell, Florida; George E. Sampson, New Jersey

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Michas M. Ohnstad, Minnesota

Historian: Harold Matthew Branton, Texas

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

### **74th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Chicago, Illinois, August 25 to 27, 1992

Commander: Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania

Vice Commanders: James 'Jim' G. Brouillette, Vermont; Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan; Ronald C. Murphy, Arizona; Lawrence F. Roy, Oklahoma; Lee R. Stolfus, Kansas

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Donal M. 'Jack' Squires, West Virginia

Historian: Bettie M. Canon, Montana

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

### **75th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 3 to 9, 1993

Commander: Roger A. Munson\*, Ohio

Vice Commanders: Joseph V. Adams, Pennsylvania; Paul Andrejewski, Minnesota; Robert E. 'Jack' David, South Carolina; John William 'Bill' Murphy, Arizona; Louis A.

'Tony' Santillanes, New Mexico

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. James R. Wagner, Mississippi

Historian: Delfo Barabani, Massachusetts

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

### **76th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 6 to 8, 1994

Commander: Bruce Thiesen, California

Vice Commanders: Juan H. Cintron, Puerto Rico; Douglas A. Mason, Utah; John J. Mulkern, Massachusetts; K.W. Ohl, Indiana; Curtis O. Twete, North Dakota.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Msgr. Raymond J. Kozlowski\*, New York

Historian: Marjorie T. Simpson, Georgia

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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**77th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Indianapolis, Indiana, September 4 to 6, 1995

Commander : William M. Detweiler, Louisiana

Vice Commanders: Joseph T. Craig, Alaska; Silas M. Noel, Kentucky; Calvin E. Patton, Maryland; H. Gordon Burleigh, New York; Vernon K. Grosenick\*, Wisconsin

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Roy L. Pryor, South Carolina

Historian: M. LaReine Maxey\*, Nevada, (died 10-7-94) Appointed at 1994 Fall

Meetings, Carl S. Wipperman, Washington

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

**78th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Salt Lake City, Utah, August 30 to September 5, 1996

Commander: Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota

Vice Commanders: Keith Baker, Iowa; William L. Ciciotte, Maine; Robert D. Scott, Oregon; C. Darrel Haskell, South Dakota; Ralph J. Reel, Tennessee

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Joseph E. Reynolds, Texas

Historian: R. Paul Tenney, Vermont

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

**79th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Orlando, Florida, August 29 to September 4, 1997

Commander: Joseph J. Frank, Missouri

Vice Commanders: Wilson R. Timmons,\* Florida; Orland H. Taylor, Hawaii; Roger L. Wild, Nebraska; Albert M. Robotti, New Jersey; Robert L. Bowen, Virginia

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Charles H. Richmond, Oklahoma

Historian: Barbara 'Bobbe' Stuvengen, Wisconsin

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

**80th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, September 4 to 10, 1998

Commander: Anthony Jordan, Maine

Vice Commanders: Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut; Conrad A. Chisholm, Idaho; Norris W. Preston, Missouri; Gerald L. Moore\*, Ohio; Robert E. Vass, West Virginia

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart, Pennsylvania

Historian: Tommy Mills, Mississippi

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

**81st NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Anaheim, California, September 3 to 9, 1999

Commander: Butch L. Miller, Virginia

Vice Commanders: Leo P. Burke, California; Roger L. Tingler, Georgia; James W.

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Gravenstein, Kansas; Fernando M. Goulart, Rhode Island; John D. Morris, Texas  
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan  
Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. Sweeney  
Historian: Robert L. Klipstine  
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.  
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

**82nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 1 to 7, 2000  
Commander: Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho  
Vice Commanders: James F. Fraughnaugh, Alabama; Milton W. Lobstein, Michigan;  
Robert Skallerud, Minnesota; Robert F. Neville, New York; L. Harry Easley,  
Washington  
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan  
Chaplain: David R. Brown, Louisiana  
Historian: Robert Mead, Nebraska  
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana  
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

**83rd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

San Antonio, Texas, August 24-30, 2001  
Commander: Ray G. Smith, North Carolina  
Vice Commanders: Charles C. Ragsdell, Arkansas; James E. Koutz, Indiana; Henry P.  
Bradley, Massachusetts; John C. Pellegrini, Montana; William A. Weatherly, South  
Carolina  
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan  
Chaplain: Calvin C. Turpin, California  
Historian: James Buterbaugh, Kansas  
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana  
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**of the**  
**83<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
**of**  
**THE AMERICAN LEGION**  
**Tuesday, August 28, 2001**

...At 8:30 a.m. the Delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole, our organist.

...At 9:00 a.m. the Delegates assembled for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted.

**Bridging the Gap**

This morning, before I gavel this Convention to order, I believe it's fitting to add a dash of fun to your day. It's been nearly a year since I told you that I thought belonging to The American Legion and taking part in our many activities should be fun. Having fun is part of the comradeship that makes our organization strong. It has kept us that way for generations. So with that thought firmly planted in your mind, I believe it's time to have a little fun this morning before we get down to the important business of the day.

Each and every person is unique. Yet, when it comes to being a Legion National Commander there is a common experience among these honored few that I must share with you.

You know, I have gained a pound or two since you elected me your leader this past year. That's because members of The American Legion family learned long ago it's fun to eat. And, I believe those Past National Commanders with us this morning can relate to my belt-line plight.

I am grateful for the opportunity I have had for these 51 weeks to lead the greatest veterans' organization in the world in continuing to do what we have done since our founding. We care for children and their families. We care for our comrades. We care for our communities. And in caring for so much, we have fun.

Now, I bet everyone in this room has read or heard about the demise of our organization. You might even have a naysayer or two in your Post. Let me assure you that our organization remains strong. And we're going to continue to be a force to reckon with for generations to come.

...Applause.

Just for this morning, sit back and watch the events that are about to unfold, and see if you don't recognize some of your own members in need of some help "Bridging the Gap."

... At this time, the delegation listened to "I will follow you," song by Rosemary Clooney.

DALE PUNCH: What a great song! That little Peggy March sure was a honey.

MILT LOBSTEIN: Peggy Marsh? That wasn't Peggy March. That was ... that was

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Rosemary Clooney.

GEORGE HOOTEN: Now, knock it off you two. We've got a problem and you're arguing over who sang a song. I tell you, this organization can't make it much longer. We've tried everything. We just can't get these young veterans to join us.

MILT LOBSTEIN: I know, they don't seem to be interested in our bingo or dancing to that dance band we've had for 20 years. And we've tried everything but that music of the '80s that they're starting to play. It's starting to bug me.

DALE PUNCH: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I recruited some of those Gulf War guys a few years ago. They wanted to do something, but it turned out all wrong. They wanted to do it their way but they didn't realize they had to earn their own stripes.

*[another area]*

BARBARA THURLOW: Look at those old guys over there. Probably wondering why I didn't join them. I wanted to but they said for me to go see the Auxiliary and help with dinner.

WALTER DAVIS: Well, for me it was about the same. I joined and wanted to become active, but all they wanted to do was their little thing. I wanted to get into the neighborhoods around the Post and help the kids, you know, make a difference. They're not interested.

JEFF JOHNSON: I've had the same experience. They want our money but they don't want our ideas. They're stuck in the past.

*[back to the first area]*

DALE PUNCH: Look over there. Young veterans. They don't know what it means to be a real volunteer.

VOICE OF GOD: I never thought it would come to this. Why does everyone need a superhero these days to bridge gaps and gets people working together?

WALTER DAVIS: Look over there, old man's club members. Won't change.

VOICE OF GOD: Oh well, if that's what it takes, that's what it takes. Now, let me think. Yeah, this ought to do it.

Attention Legionnaires in San Antonio. I've been watching and listening, something you should do more often, if you get my drift. Anyhow, it's time for a heavy weapon, a superhero to lead you. I give you The Average Legionnaire.

*...Applause.*

SUPERHERO: What did you expect, some young muscular guy? What the heck. I am The Average Legionnaire.

Enough about me already. I've been sent here to do a bit of bridge building. My orders are clear and there's no time to waste. Now look at these fine members on each side of me back here. One group has labored hard for many years, and they've made a difference to this other group right over here. And now when they need to be listening to these folks over here, the old excuse comes around of a generation gap. Well, I want you to know something, there is no generation gap. So it's up to me to find the right people here to communicate with you, get my drift?

Now, let's see now. I believe one of you over here said that these younger people don't know anything about volunteering. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Now, I met a group of people a little earlier today. I want them to come up here. Where are my young military people that do some volunteering? Come on up here.

*...Applause.*

Who are you?

PETTY OFFICER WEAVER: I'm Petty Officer Second Class, Anjail Weaver.

SUPERHERO: Where are you from Anjail?

PETTY OFFICER WEAVER: Originally I'm from Kansas City, Kansas stationed in

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Jacksonville, Florida.

SUPERHERO: Now, are you a volunteer?

PETTY OFFICER WEAVER: I sure am, all the time.

SUPERHERO: And what about you? Who are you?

SPECIALIST FIRST CLASS DURKOP: My name is Specialist Jousette Durkop.

SUPERHERO: And Jousette, where were you from?

SPECIALIST FIRST CLASS DURKOP: I'm proud to call Palmer, Alaska home, and I'm stationed at Fort Irwin, California.

SUPERHERO: And are you a volunteer?

SPECIALIST FIRST CLASS DURKOP: I sure am.

SUPERHERO: What kind of volunteer work do you do?

SPECIALIST FIRST CLASS DURKOP: I work with the Squadron VOS Program and I volunteer inside and outside the post community outstanding.

SUPERHERO: Well, outstanding. Now this fine young man. Who are you?

SERGEANT CROSSFIELD: Sergeant Charles Crossfield, United States Marine Corps.

Hue!

SUPERHERO: Thank you. Sergeant Crossfield, where are you from?

SERGEANT CROSSFIELD: Originally Lexington, Kentucky, and stationed in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

SUPERHERO: Now, what kind of volunteer work are you involved in?

SERGEANT CROSSFIELD: I help with the Marine Corps Toys For Tots Program.

SUPERHERO: Outstanding. Our next young man?

STAFF SERGEANT CORMIER: Staff Sergeant Joseph Cormier.

SUPERHERO: Where were you from?

STAFF SERGEANT CORMIER: I'm originally from Jennings, Louisiana, stationed in Hulburt Field, Florida.

SUPERHERO: What kind of volunteer work do you do?

STAFF SERGEANT CORMIER: I do a lot of work with the mentally handicapped, especially through the Special Olympics Program.

SUPERHERO: That's great. Thank you. Well, we have one more. And I sense a trend coming here that you must be a volunteer as well?

PETTY OFFICER MARTIN: Yes, sir.

SUPERHERO: Who are you?

PETTY OFFICER MARTIN: I'm Petty Officer Charles Martin.

SUPERHERO: Charles Martin. Where are you stationed?

PETTY OFFICER MARTIN: Stationed in Clearwater, Florida.

SUPERHERO: What's your home?

PETTY OFFICER MARTIN: Shepherdsville, Kentucky.

SUPERHERO: All right. Now what kind of volunteer work do you do?

PETTY OFFICER MARTIN: I work with fund-raisers and charity dinners throughout my local community.

SUPERHERO: Great. Now, guys, come here, I've got a problem. See these people back over here? They really need to hear from somebody who is in the military today who does some volunteer work, because they just kind of have it all wrong. Would you go sit down with them, talk to them a little bit; see if you can't let them know what you do? Thank you. Would you just go over there and introduce yourselves and sit down?

Now, what am I going to do about these folks over here? You know, they need to be involved with what's going on in The American Legion. And they need to understand that

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you can't just throw the baby out with the bath water, if you pardon the old expression, because our programs are good.

I've got it. Where are our Youth Champions? That's a good group. Here they are. All right.

...Applause.

Who are you?

MICHAEL BECKEL: Michael Beckel, Eagle Scout of the Year.

SUPERHERO: Where are you from, Michael?

MICHAEL BECKEL: Cold Springs, Minnesota.

...Applause.

SUPERHERO: And you love the cool temperatures in San Antonio; don't you?

MICHAEL BECKEL: I sure do.

SUPERHERO: I'll bet. Who's our next one?

JOSHUA ZENDER: Josh Zender, Baseball Player of the Year.

...Applause.

SUPERHERO: Where are you from, Josh?

JOSHUA ZENDER: Deming, Washington.

SUPERHERO: And where are you going to college now?

JOSHUA ZENDER: Gonzaga University.

SUPERHERO: Gonzaga University. All right. Who's next here?

EVAN WILSON: Evan Wilson, Boys Nation President.

SUPERHERO: Oh, a politician. Evan, where are you from?

EVAN WILSON: I'm from Roswell, Georgia.

SUPERHERO: All right. You got political aspirations?

EVAN WILSON: Absolutely! Not!

SUPERHERO: Who's next here?

BRANDON GREEN: Brandon Green, Bogalusa, Louisiana.

SUPERHERO: Brandon from Bogalusa. Now, why are you here?

BRANDON GREEN: Junior Shooting Sports Champion.

SUPERHERO: Junior Shooting Sport Champion. That's one of the newest programs; right?

BRANDON GREEN: Yes, sir.

SUPERHERO: That's great. And one more here.

CALEB WILLIAMS: Caleb Williams, the Oratorical Champion.

SUPERHERO: Oh, Caleb, you've got the voice for it. Where are you from?

CALEB WILLIAMS: Lewisville, Texas.

SUPERHERO: Are you anywhere after Texas? Where are you going to school?

CALEB WILLIAMS: I live in Kentucky and go to school in Kentucky right now.

SUPERHERO: Outstanding. Now, if I understand this, you all earned scholarship money for taking part in existing programs.

...The group agrees.

I need a little help. This group of people right over here behind me, would you go sit down and talk to them a little bit and see if you can't maybe convince them that they could get involved with some of our current programs and maybe move forward from there? Sure, go over there and introduce yourselves; see what's going on. Now, while my key people are doing their job, I must point out that there is plenty of good going on back home all of the time.

...First video tape clip begins.



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From the news center in Washington, this is *AFRTS* News.

They volunteer for a job you couldn't pay others to do.

"Aim. Fire."

Some days you go through it fine and then other days it's very emotional.

Culpepper National Cemetery in Virginia is familiar to these veterans who come out on a regular basis to give a final salute to a fellow soldier.

"Please accept this flag in recognition of his faithful service to his country in service of a mighty grateful nation. God bless you."

They are members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and The American Legion. Many have spent part of the past 20 years going to the funerals of total strangers.

"Aim. Fire."

You're giving somebody a send off that they should have, no matter what. A veteran is a veteran and they should have a military burial.

The Defense Department is reaching out to volunteers like these to help augment the current military funeral honors. And while these men welcome a partnership with the services, they are also ready to keep rendering honors on their own.

Well, it's really the last thing the veteran gets.

... *Taps.*

... *First video tape clip ends.*

... *Second video tape clip starts.*

EDWARD G. SPERRY: At the Department Fall Conference in Helena, Montana, I made a statement that the National Headquarters thinks it knows more about Montana than we do. And that if we think a Post ought to be closed down, we're on the scene, we ought to know what's what. A bit pompous? Yes. But doesn't that sound like it ought to be right? Well, it's time to share with you the events that followed. You will then understand why I'm eating crow.

During the Fall Conference we had a membership school for District Commanders, Department Executive Committeemen and the rest of the attendees. The teacher was Jim Feidler from National Headquarters. He's employed by the Legion to help revitalize Posts and start up new Posts.

I spent the next three weeks with Jim. It was an experience to say the least. We, I want some modicum of credit, revitalized one Post that was down to absolute zilch, and on the surrender charter list. We were told by the locals it could not be done. Jim smiled, listened, and then proceeded to do it.

In just over two days we had 15 new members. This was in a small town no one wanted to join; nothing could be done. Seeing is believing. Someone just had to take the time to care and try, and have his act together and start asking. I came to realize that no one had been asked to join for years. The only possible conclusion was we failed to sell ourselves and our programs. The ground is fertile, we just haven't been planting any seeds.

Well, we then moved on to a small town where there had never been a Legion Post. Jim sought out the school authorities, the town marshal and press, and then started asking and following up on leads. In less than three days we had more than 15 charter members for a new Post.

One point that seemed very important to explain was that school kids were getting left out on some great opportunities. We should keep in mind that the Legion's goal is to have a Post in every high school. I'm here to tell you, even though my mouth is full of unsalted crow, that it can be done. We have the programs; we have a wonderful history to call upon. Do we have the will to do it?

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*...End of video clip*

VOICE OF GOD: Attention again Legionnaires in San Antonio. I want to know who started the rumor that The American Legion is a dying organization? Why, all you have to do is look around and you could easily see that's not true. And you know what I think about untruths.

Legionnaires do still care for veterans, their families; the children of this country and every community, large and small. The strength of The American Legion today remains at the Post level. That's where soccer, baseball, school programs, oratorical contests, shooting sports, Boy Scouts, Boys State and Boys Nation, support of the Children's Miracle Network, the National Emergency Fund and the service to others creates a solid foundation.

The Youth Champions you met this morning represent more than 236,000 young Americans who take part in our youth programs each and every year. Thanks to your generosity and hard work, more than 2.1 million dollars in scholarships are awarded to our future leaders each year.

The challenges that face our organization today are the same as they were in 1919. The needs remain the same, and it seems as if they will be around for many more years. Each and every Legionnaire and all members of The American Legion family are important. Take it from me, it's time for you to start listening to yourselves and not the news media.

GEORGE HOOTEN: You've done all that while on active duty?

THE GROUP: Yes, sir.

GEORGE HOOTEN: Will you keep it up after you get out?

THE GROUP: Sure.

BARBARA THURLOW: Tell me again how much scholarship money you earned?

MILT LOBSTEIN: We've got some really good youth programs but we need someone like you to join us and keep them going. You know, I'm not as young as you are.

JEFF JOHNSON: I guess I just didn't realize the depth of our established programs. You Youth Champions sure have impressed me.

DALE PUNCH: Give us a hand with baseball and our school programs and you will be doing us a big favor.

WALTER DAVIS: So, do you think I could help coach a Post baseball team next year?

MILT LOBSTEIN: Is there anything we could do now to help you with your volunteer efforts while you're still on active duty?

THE GROUP: Oh, yes.

SUPERHERO: So, are we making any progress over here.

THE GROUP: Yeah.

DALE PUNCH: These young veterans do understand. They're ready right now to give us a hand and take hints from us and help us with our programs.

SPECIALIST FIRST CLASS DURKOP: Well, why not? We are in the service to help others together; right?

THE GROUP: Right.

SUPERHERO: That's great. I'm glad to hear that. Now, I hope things are going as well over here on the other side. Okay, my fine young Legion leaders, how are things going over here? Do you see a future for you in The American Legion?

THE GROUP: Absolutely. Sure.

JEFF JOHNSON: I guess we wanted to push too hard to start too many new things without realizing the importance of what was already in place.

WALTER DAVIS: I hope they'll let me help coach Legion baseball next year. Man, I love baseball.

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SUPERHERO: You know, I think it's time for you to meet some long-time Legionnaires that will be very glad to have you show them some things too. Why don't you come over here and meet some folks?

Whew! You know, I think my mission is accomplished. Now, would somebody get me out of here so I can get some rest, this Superhero business is exhausting, I'll tell you. All right.

BARBARA THURLOW: Well, what are we waiting for? Let's get going and lay some plans for the coming year.

VOICE OF GOD: Nice job Average Legionnaire. I hope I won't need you for many years. Now, it seems to me that something is missing this morning. Oh, I know, we need some music. We need some youthful energy. We need the Soundsations of Ronald Reagan High School in San Antonio.

...At this time the musical group Soundsations from Ronald Reagan High School entertained the Convention delegates.

... Standing applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Let's have another round of applause for the members of the Soundsations from Ronald Reagan High School under the direction of Jo Scurlock-Dillard.

... Applause.

I want to thank our talented volunteers who made this reflective skit possible this morning. World War II veteran, George Hooten of Georgia; Korean veteran, Milt Lobstein of Michigan; Vietnam veteran Dale Punch of North Carolina; and our go-getter veterans, graduates of The American Legion College, Barbara Thurlow of Idaho; Walter Davis of Michigan; and Jeff Johnson of Arizona; The Spirit of Service Winners who you will meet again later today; Army Private First Class Jousette Durkop of Fort Irwin, California; Navy Aerographer's Mate Second Class Anjail Weaver, Jacksonville, Florida; Marine Sergeant Charles T. Crossfield, Fort Knox, Kentucky; Coast Guard Food Service Specialist Second Class Charles Martin, Clearwater, Florida; Air Force Staff Sergeant Joseph Cormier, Hulbert Field, Florida; our outstanding Youth Champions: Caleb Williams of Lewisville, Texas, the Oratorical Winner; Brandon Green of Poplarville, Mississippi, the Junior Shooting Sports Champion; Josh Zender of Deming, Washington, the American Legion Baseball Player of the Year; Evan Wilson of Roswell, Georgia, the President of American Legion Boys Nation; and Michael Beckel of Cold Springs, Minnesota the Eagle Scout of the Year.

... Applause.

Also here is the only guy we could find willing to dress up in such a silly outfit to be a Superhero, Lee Harris of the National Public Relations staff. And finally, I hear some of you who think you saw a few bicycles riding through the Convention Hall this morning. Let me assure you it was not a mirage. Those riders are the members of Team American Legion. They are adventure racers and took part in the Armed Forces Eco-Challenge in Alaska in June. You will learn more about them and the race later in the Convention. For now let me introduce to you:

Team Leader, Captain May VanDyke, U.S. Army Reserves, York, Pennsylvania; Captain Steve Kreis, U.S. Army Reserves, York, Pennsylvania; Captain Mike Dunlavy, U.S. Army, LaGrande, Oregon; and Staff Sergeant Don Kent, U.S. Army, Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Please give all of these folks a rousing round of applause for being here at our Convention.

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I think you will agree this was a different opening program. I hope you found that it was not only fun but looked a bit deeper to get the message. The American Legion can accomplish anything if we take advantage of the special interests and talents of every member. That's what Bridging The Gap is all about.

From our American Legion College graduates, to the Reconnect program and revitalizing Posts, we are growing toward our vision of an American Legion Post for every high school in the nation. And as we grow, we make a difference for today and for many tomorrows.

Now as we turn to the business of our Convention this morning, I have one important announcement to make. Thanks to you and the thousands more you represent, it is official. The American Legion membership slide is over. Our membership stands at 2,701,002. That's a gain of 8,000 members, and it signals the bright future for all of America's veterans, their families and the youth of our nation. From the bottom of my North Carolina heart, thank you for what you have done this past year.

... Applause.

#### **Call to Order**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The 83<sup>rd</sup> National Convention will now come to order. The National State Champion Color Guard from The American Legion Post No. 10 in Albany, Oregon presents the colors of our nation.

... Albany, Oregon Color Guard of American Legion Post 10, presented the Colors, following which Martha Corriherr, American Legion Auxiliary of North Carolina, sang the National Anthem.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I upon our National Chaplain, Dr. Calvin C. Turpin of Post 69, California for the invocation.

#### **Invocation**

**Dr. Calvin C. Turpin, California**

Our father and our God, with reverence, love and gratitude we pause in prayer at the beginning of this 83<sup>rd</sup> National Convention. Grant us Thy presence and counsel during our deliberation. Look with favor upon this gathering of war veterans. We know Thy grace and goodness make it possible for The American Legion to meet in San Antonio for this historic convention. Now that we are here, direct our thoughts and deliberations and actions. Direct our Commander as he leads, give us kind and gentle spirits as we follow. Amen.

#### **Post Everlasting Ceremony and Lighting of the Peace Candle**

*Video tape begins here*

Since we last met at the National Convention fifty-one weeks ago, the passing of three Past National Commanders has saddened us. William E. Burke, Department of California, National Commander, 1960-61, a World War II Navy veteran and member of Post 8 in Los Angeles went to our Lord, May 7, 2001. James M. Wagonseller, Department of Ohio, Past National Commander, 1974-75, a World War II Army veteran and member of Post 11 in Lancaster, Ohio, went to our Lord May 26, 2001. E. Roy Stone, Jr., National Executive Committeeman, Department of South Carolina, Past National Commander at the 60<sup>th</sup>

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National Convention, San Antonio, 1987, a World War II Navy veteran and member of the James F. Daniel Post 3, Rainbow, South Carolina went to our Lord April 29, 2001.

Each of these men contributed to the success of The American Legion. Each of these men met the unique challenges of their time. Their mentors were friends of the Great War. They were World War II veterans, who were mentors for wartime veterans of Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Grenada, Lebanon and Desert Storm. Each played a key role in developing the leaders of The American Legion and deepened the understanding, underlying principles which continue to guide us.

When The American Legion gathered for the 76th National Convention in Minneapolis in 1994, E. Roy Stone, Jr. felt it proper for the nation's latest veterans' organization, to reaffirm the principles adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> National Convention in the same city 75 years later. The result of his initiative was Resolution No. 419, brought before the Delegates who resoundingly adopted Minneapolis Affirmation.

RESOLVED, That we express our eternal gratitude for the wisdom and foresight of the founders in this, our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, by affirming anew our commitment to the perpetuation of our principles;

That in affirmation of our troth, we pledge our unrelenting vigilance on behalf of our comrades-in-arms, their children, and their widows and orphans;

That we affirm the American Flag to be the sole unifying symbol of these United States, a nation born of diversity and nurtured in the shadow of that banner, beneath which the honored remains of countless heroes have been laid to rest, deserving if need be of our protection unto death;

That we affirm to the generations as yet unborn their due inheritance, a legacy no less grand than that to which we are heirs: a nation strong, united and flourishing in peace and prosperity;

That we affirm to our nation's defenders, and the citizens they serve, our dedication to national sovereignty and security so inviolable as to render America forever free from aggression and domination by those that would do us harm;

That we affirm the principle the citizen soldiery by our support and dedication to those who stand in ready preparedness to answer the call to arms, the Reserve and National Guard forces;

That we affirm to all Americans our commitment to the principle of government of the people, by the people, and for the people, a principle best embodied by a Congress unfettered and free from foreign influence and ever alert to the failures of foreign policy by which the constraints on war are loosed;

That by the witness of Man and in the presence of Almighty God, we do hereby commend this affirmation to all in whom these sentiments ring true.

At this time National Sergeant-at-Arms, R. Chaffered Admission of North Carolina will light the Peace Candle.

...At this time National Sergeant-at-Arms lighted the Peace Candle.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I now introduce to you the lady who sang our National Anthem so beautifully, Mrs. Martha Corriher of North Carolina.

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**POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: At this time we pause to remember those who are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Thousands of names in this category, names not numbers. We in The American Legion will never forget them. We not ease the pressure on our government to do the right thing and to continue to work for an accounting of those missing. Let us pause now as Past National Commander, Robert Turner of Georgia, Chairman of the special POW/MIA Committee and Doc Simon of Vermont, Chairman of our Foreign Relations Commission, place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.

...At this time, the POW/MIA flag was placed on the Empty Chair.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

...At this time the Delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Legionnaires, please join me in reaffirming our commitment to the principles and ideals on which our great American Legion was founded by reciting with me, the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

...At this time, the Delegation recited the Preamble.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: As we get down to the important business before us, it is a pleasure to welcome our first speaker. He is a former Economics professor who taught for 12 years at Texas A&M. He currently serves as the ranking member of the Senate Banking Committee. A national magazine once described him as "a man who carries his own garment bag and does his own thinking". A co-sponsor of the Flag Protection Amendment in the U.S. Senate. Please welcome Senator Phil Gramm.

**Address: Honorable Phil Gramm  
United States Senator**

It is my great opportunity to welcome you to San Antonio and to Texas. Welcome to military city, U.S.A. In fact, here in San Antonio and in Texas we believe in a strong defense and we are proud of the fact that we provide leadership every single day here in San Antonio and all across Texas, providing for the national defense of America. I want to thank The American Legion for the great leadership in America for the many things you do to promote love of our country, respect for our flag, and knowledge of our history and sacrifice that has been made by those who have kept us the richest, freest and happiest country in the world.

Everyday in the American Congress, in the United States Senate, we debate defense. I believe in a strong defense and I believe that it should be with strong people. I am proud of the fact that we have recruited and retained some of the finest young men and women who have ever worn the uniform of this country and they wear that uniform with pride. We want to keep it that way by providing the pay and the benefits that will help us continue recruit and retain good people in the military. And nowhere is it more important that we do that than in providing the benefits that we guaranteed the people that have served in the past.

We are talking about retirement benefits and veteran benefits. We are not just talking about meeting the obligation to the people who have defended this country, but we are also talking about the very real impact on recruiting. If we don't live up to the commitments we

made to the people who have served in the past, then people who would serve in the future will find that they don't believe the commitments we make today. I want to thank The American Legion for its leadership in supporting everyday in the Congress efforts to see that we provide the benefits and the health care for those who have served the country in the past have earned.

I don't know about you, but I am tired of debating a World War II Memorial. I want to build it. I can't speak for the architects and the so-called experts, but I have to believe George Washington and Abraham Lincoln would be very happy to have a memorial for the greatest generation in between them in the Mall in Washington, D.C. I don't believe that I am just speaking for myself or The American Legion, I believe that the American people have come to understand what a great generation we have that had fought and won World War II and protected freedom on this planet.

My dad was a career soldier and I was born at Fort Benning, Georgia. My dad was a Sergeant in the Army for 28 years, 7 months and 27 days and all of his life he was proud to have served in the military. But I am not sure I realized until Ronald Reagan went to Pont du Hoc and gave that speech, until we had the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day, what a great generation that my father was a part of. And I think the time has come to end this debate, to begin the construction of the World War II Memorial Mall in Washington, D.C. I intend to do whatever I have to do to make it happen.

I thank The American Legion for the leadership in our efforts to protect the American flag. Now look, I believe in free speech, but I believe that people have the ability to express themselves in ways other than desecrating the national symbol. If people want to stand on their head, jump up and down, wave their hands, set their britches on fire to call attention to themselves, that's fine. But I don't think they have to desecrate the American flag to do it.

I believe the American flag ought to be protected and I don't understand a country where two consenting adults can engage in any type of activity whatsoever with total governmental protection and yet if they want to engage in prayer, or the creation of jobs, or the protection of the flag, they have no protection from the government whatsoever. I think we have things turned upside down. I think the Flag Amendment would be a very important step in fixing it and I want you to know that I am proud to support your position in protecting the American flag.

Finally, let me say that we had a problem in Texas before the problem with military voting in Florida woke the nation up. But I believe we need federal legislation to guarantee the right of people in uniform to vote. I don't want to say I am partisan. Al Gore's people went out and tried to prevent the counting of military ballots. They lost all credibility they had in demanding fairness. They wanted to count every vote but not the votes that count.

Now we ran into a problem in Texas several years ago where there was an effort to deny, in Del Rio, military personnel who were serving outside the state and abroad the right to vote in local elections. We need to guarantee by law that people who put on the uniform of this country, that when they designate an area that they are going to vote in and that it is their legal residence where they are going to pay taxes, that when they are abroad serving this country or serving somewhere else in this world they have a right to vote, they have a right to see those votes counted. I want us to work together this year to guarantee that never again is the right of military personnel to vote ever challenged, or is any absentee military personnel vote not counted. They have followed what they have believed to be the rules and procedures in effect on Election Day.

Let me thank each of you for coming to San Antonio. We are very happy to have you

here. I hear you stuck the Texas Delegation way off in the corner somewhere. Makes me nervous they may be darting out the door and not listening to the lectures. I want to thank The American Legion, not for what you have done in the past, not for your efforts to keep this the greatest country in the world, not for your successful efforts alone to win and preserve freedom all over the world, but I want to thank this organization for standing up for American values and not being ashamed to say that we believe in old fashioned virtues like respecting the flag, and loving and respecting the people who wear the military uniform of the country.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Just last month the House of Representatives passed the Flag Protection Constitutional Amendment. That is for the fourth time that the House has supported We the People, the campaign to restore centuries of protection for Old Glory. To bring us up to date on what needs to be done, I present to this body the chairman of the board of the Flag Alliance and a recipient of the Medal of Honor for his life saving actions in Vietnam. Please join me in rendering proper honors to a true American hero, Major General Patrick Brady, United State Army Retired.

**Report: Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.  
Retired Major General Patrick H. Brady, U.S. Army, Chairman**

It is always a great pleasure for me to be with you and to share the warmth of your presence, especially here in San Antonio. This is where I had my first duty station in the military. It was here that I received the offer from the President to go to the White House and receive the Medal [of Honor]. I have to be careful what I say in Texas, I also lived in Alaska for a long time. I once said to a Texan that they were thinking of dividing Alaska in half and making Texas the third largest state. They didn't want to hear that.

I am truly awed at the legacy that you represent. When I think of the humble beginnings on St. Patrick's Day so long ago, the dedication and the struggle of those who went before. Your legacy includes most of the presidents of the last century, as well as some of this nation's greatest heroes and most, if not all, of the Medal of Honor guys that I know; giants of industry, diplomats, elected officials and many members of Congress; men like James Wagoner and E. Roy Stone, Jr., ordinary men and the great leaders who you have in this organization. No matter how busy they were, they found time to be patriots.

The women have been with you every step of the way. We hear so much about the courage of men, mostly on the battlefields, but the women know the 3 o'clock in the morning kind of courage, really the toughest kind. I am often reminded of the passion of Jesus and I wonder where were the men? The women stuck with Him all of the way.

Sons of the Legion have been so generous in every way with the flag amendment. Your legacy encompasses monumental accomplishments. The G.I. Bill enabled the greatest generation to build the greatest nation in the history. And today the youth who you developed—and today we saw so many of those great people here—continue the tradition of patriotism and represent all that is good in America in every level of service and sacrifice and leadership.

But what you are doing for our constitution through the flag amendment maybe your greatest legacy. The enemy today may be more formidable that you have faced on any battlefield, the flag debate in the House, where you heard that we gained another great victory, highlighted the great divide in our nation on the Constitution and, in fact, the very definition of patriotism. Our opposition define the essence of freedom as a toleration of unpatriotic conduct. They actually separate freedom from responsibly and, amazingly, from



patriotism itself.

They have their own version of patriotism. They say the flag symbolizes the freedom to burn it; that our flag is the symbol of unpatriotic conduct, that burning the symbol of patriotism is patriotic. They cower before the courts. They believe the courts, not we the people, rule. And for good reason. Many of them know that their agenda could never survive in the bright lights of public square where the people rule. Their only hope is in the courtrooms where the dark-robed, unelected elite rule.

But in the hostility of the media environment in which we all live, sound bites are the norm. It is true that if you can control the language, control of the mind is not far behind. In a few seconds, opinions are formed, laws are made and tragically, many sound bites are false and misleading and we are led astray. For this reason, it is vital that we fill our quiver with truth bites as we go into battle with those who would disfigure America and teach our children that flag desecration is speech. We must out communicate them.

We cannot repeat too often these truths. Never forget that all we are doing for the flag is the Constitution. The Constitution is the only guarantee for our future. It is under attack and it is too little understood by too many of us. To those who say that desecrating the flag is speech, ask them what is said when it is burned. Ask how you can burn a flag with your tongue. Tommy Lasorda, that great American, said that speech is when you talk.

Our opponents believe that they are wiser than 80% of the people and 70% of the Congress. They believe they are wiser than 49 states that petitioned Congress for this amendment. Four Chief Justices of the United States said that flag burning was not speech and Justices on five other Supreme Courts in the last century agreed with Tommy Lasorda. If they disagree with this mighty armada of flag defenders, ask if they also disagree with James Madison. He wrote the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment and Thomas Jefferson who also agreed with Lasorda.

Richard Gephardt, of Missouri, was right in condemning our opponents when he said that "Those who seek to distort our Constitution while cloaking themselves in disguise of freedom of speech are wrong." To those who say the flag is precious to them, but the Constitution is more precious, ask if they have any possession, anyone, or anything that they love that is precious to them that they would not protect. Pat Boone said that this was like saying you that you loved your mother, but it was okay to batter her around.

They say they do not want to amend the constitution for the flag. Tell them we are not amending the Constitution for the flag. We are doing it for the Constitution. To those who worry about making felons of those who burn the flag, tell them that we oppose that, that we don't want to do that. Flag burners are not the problem. The problem is those that distort our constitution by calling flag burning speech. To all who found virtue in bashing our values, who say that we must tolerate conduct that the majority find evil or offensive, ask them where that is written in our Constitution. If anyone says the flag amendment damages the Constitution, read it to them. Remind them that it damages nothing because it changes nothing. It simply restores the Constitution to its original meaning, to the meaning of the founders.

This is one that hurts. Occasionally they say that flag protection aligns us with dictatorships. Then ask them how a flag protected, according to the will of a free people, could be compared to the flag protected according to the will of a tyrant. Madison and Jefferson believed that our flag should be protected. Does that align them with Hitler and Stalin? Ask if they have ever heard of a prisoner of war of a dictatorship, fashioned from bits of cloth or toilet paper, a swastika or hammer and sickle. Ask them if any POWs have ever said a pledge to a flag of a dictatorship. Then tell them that Americans have done this

to Old Glory in every war we ever fought.

If they say that flag burning does not happen very often, tell them that once is too often. Then ask what frequency has to do with what is right or wrong. Those that say that the Supreme Court is the final word, tell them that in our Constitution the people are the final word and ask how the Supreme Court could rule that flag burning is a speech and allow it to be burned anywhere, except on the steps of the Supreme Court. Tell them of course, that President Bush strongly supports the flag amendment because, of among other things, the debt to your legacy to your sacrifice and service.

If they are confused between the difference of the Legion burning a worn out flag and someone burning or defecating on a new flag, explain the word desecrate to them. It is not a flag burning amendment, it is a flag desecration amendment. Then you should ask your representatives if they are for hate crime legislation and then ask them if burning the American flag is a hate crime. If they tell you that you could not legislate patriotism, and we hear this so often, tell them that every law that we pass should inspire, should teach, should endorse, and should ensure the patriotism of our people. The first duty of every citizen is to be a patriot and to make patriots of our children.

If they say the flag amendment reflects the tyranny of a majority, an effort to force their will on a more virtuous minority, ask them then if the minority on the Supreme Court, who wanted the flag protected, was then more virtuous than the majority who said flag burning was speech. If they are a representative, ask if the minority who would have elected their opponent is more virtuous than the majority that elected them. If they say we are trying to amend the Bill of Rights for the first time, ask them then if the Supreme Court had voted to protect the flag would they then be amending the Bill of Rights. If they were among those in the last election who said that every vote must count or if during the impeachment process said that we must listen to the people, remind them that is exactly what we are asking. Listen to the people and let every voice count.

Some have trouble defining the American flag and pretend to be concerned about prosecuting those who burn bikinis embroidered with the flag, toilet paper marked with the flag. Simply ask them if they would put a bikini or toilet paper on the coffin of a veteran or raise them from a flag pole during retreat. If anyone says that the flag represents the freedom to burn it and that our military died on the battlefields of the world so that their flag could be burn on the street corners of America, warn them not to say that to a veteran.

Our struggle is made more difficult because it seems not to be measurable in material terms. To find champions with the moral courage to fight for a cause without material benefit can be difficult. I remember a great soldier who once commented simply, "Doesn't anyone do anything any more simply because it is the right thing to do?" He was frustrated by encounters with politician and others who have a hard time finding time for any cause which measures no material or political benefits to them personally.

It is difficult for some to measure in material terms the results of the efforts of the Legion for Old Glory. For that reason many shake their heads in disbelief that we would work so hard for something that promised no monetary benefit to anyone and, in fact, has cost so much in time and treasure. The truth is that all the prosperity, all the material wealth that we enjoy is the result of all of those who sacrificed for our country and for us simply because it was the right thing to do. It returned nothing to them in a material sense, it was transcendental, and at its essence, it was love. They took love of country, love of buddies, love of God, love of family, and they turned it into action, sacrifice, action that in many cases cost them their lives. And they did this simply because it was the right thing to do.

The fact that we remember their sacrifices is important because sacrifice is important.

*Proceedings of Tuesday, August 28, 2001*

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Our children need to know that we must often do the things that, no matter how difficult they are, we must do them simply because they are the right thing to do and not because of what we get out of them. Our very freedom depends on it.

We must begin restoring the true meaning of the First Amendment and remind the courts that the people own the Constitution. This doesn't make us a dime but it does stop those who would remake our Constitution. It is the right thing to do to ensure that the outrageous conduct of a minority does not outweigh the will of the majority; it goes counter to the will of the elite but it is right thing to do. To return to our children our flag, our priceless teaching aide of patriotism won't make us rich, but it will enrich their lives and it is the right thing to do. To remind politicians that our values have no price tags, but the results can be priceless and it is the right thing to do. The bottom line is not the dollar bill, it is the Bill of Rights, it is the right of the people to define the meaning of their Constitution and that is absolutely the right thing to do.

For those who question our efforts, our question to them is this: how do you stop doing what is right? I recall with pride a conversation between a skeptic and an American Legion official. The skeptic pretended to be alarmed over how much had been spent on the Flag Amendment and asked how much more would be spent. He was told simply that we would spend whatever it took. Why? Because it is the right thing to do.

Once again you are engaged in a great battle for America, once again you are standing for what is right, and today you do not stand against tanks, rockets and missiles, your wounds certainly will not be mortal. But the wounds to America could be if your special kind of patriotism never dies. It is my great honor to stand with you in this effort and may God bless you all for all that you do for this country.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, General Brady, for your dedication to see that the flag of this country is protected.

Our next speaker has very historic roots to the Lone Star State. Her great-great-grandfather was one of Texas earliest settlers and signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. She is one of the United States Senate's leading voices on foreign policy and national security issues. As a member of the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriateness Committee, she plays a vital role in shaping America's defense policies. She considers one of her most significant legislative achievements a bill that strengthened health care benefits for veterans and military retirees. Please welcome another cosponsor of the flag protection amendment, the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison, United States Senator.

**Address: Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
United States Senator**

I am so pleased to meet General Brady, who is one of my heroes. I know that he is one of yours. I am certainly a co-sponsor of the amendment that would protect the symbol of America throughout the world.

I am so pleased that you chose San Antonio for your convention because I can't think of a place that more represents the kind of selfless defenders of a country as San Antonio with the Alamo. We also in Texas have so many military heroes. In fact, one in ten people who serve our country in the military services call Texas home and we are proud of that. I want to say too that not only am I a recent appointee to the Veterans' Affairs Committee which I actively sought to be, but my staff is full of veterans. We have veterans from Vietnam, veterans from Korea, veterans from Desert Storm serving on my staff and I look

forward to doing some things with our staff expertise on my Veterans' Affairs Committee assignment.

I want to talk to you for a minute today about Congress's major responsibility. Our number one responsibility is the national security of our country. It is our responsibility to make sure that those who have served and died to protect America's freedom over two hundred years would be honored and that our commitments to them would be kept. I've asked myself many times how can you really repay someone who has given their life for our country? I have determined that there is only one way and that is to make sure the zeal for freedom is passed to their children and to their grandchildren for the strength of our country. That is why I want to discuss our role and what we must do in Congress.

We must maintain a capable military and we must realize that the world is different from even a decade ago. We must ensure that we are treating our men and women in the services well. We must make sure that we do more than throw money at the problem. We must have a national strategy and leadership from the top. In today's new world we need to assess what we are doing, provide the assess to achieve the mission and to have the exit strategy before we go in. We need to encourage our allies to take a greater role, allowing our forces to contribute rather than take the full responsibility every time. This requires an immediate review of our overseas missions.

Today's military requires better pay, better health care, and better training. We can no longer afford for fast food restaurants to compete with military pay and benefits. We will certainly not attract the skilled men and women unless we provide a competitive standard of living and quality of life. There is an old saying, "We recruit the soldier, but we retain the family"; we must honor this.

There are many things we must do to arrest the alarming trend of our military readiness going toward a hollow force. First and foremost, we must deploy the available technology for a national defense, missile defense system. We must restore our military readiness with our increase in defense spending on new, modern weapons for the future, better pay, better health care, and better housing for our military personnel to retain the most experienced in our military. We will do this.

Part of the commitment that we make to our military and to our veterans is quality health care. I have been alarmed at the way we have treated our Desert Storm Syndrome, people who have returned from service in Desert Storm. I will not stand for our Pentagon to say ever again, "well, it's just psychosomatic." That is why I have introduced a bill to require that Desert Storm Syndrome have the research that we need to find the cause, the research we need to find the treatment, and the care these people who served deserve. I will make sure they are. I am pleased to say that my first vote on the Veteran's Affairs Committee was for my Desert Storm Benefits Bill to be passed to the United States Senate and we will vote on that bill in September or October of this year. We are going to find the reason that one in seven of our military personnel who serve in Desert Storm have this Desert Storm Syndrome, and I think it is the least that we can do for those who served.

I want to end with a true story that very early in my Senate career and really shaped my thinking as a member of the Armed Services Committee and later as a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. I want you to know that my role in defense is what I consider to be my most significant responsibility. I am so proud that I have been able to visit our personnel in Saudi Arabia, in Kuwait, in Kosova, in Bosnia, in Croatia, in Germany, in Italy; throughout the world I have gone to visit our troops. But all of this started my thinking as I was coming home very early in my Senate career in 1994.

I was coming home from Washington on a Friday afternoon and a man walked up to

me on the plane and said, "Hi Senator, my name is Larry Joyce, I'm your constituent." And I said, "Hi Larry, how are you doing? What were you doing in Washington?" He said, "I was burying my son in Arlington National Cemetery." I asked, "Did he die in Somalia?" He said, "Yes, he did". His tears started streaming down his cheeks and then he said, "Senator, I'm a military man. I served two tours in Vietnam. I came back without a scratch. My son on his first mission as a Ranger, is not coming home and I can't tell you why."

I was just stunned. And I thought for any father or mother to feel that their son or daughter died for a reason that they could not give, that is wrong. We should never send our young men and women into conflict overseas unless we know it is a United States security interest and there is no substitute for that. So I think of Larry Joyce and the thousands of other mothers and fathers of those serving in our military today every time we embark on a military mission. I think again how can we make sure that the sons and daughters who are serving in our military know that we have a strategy, that we know our place in the world, and that we will not send them into conflict unless there is a United States security interest at stake.

So I am here to honor you and to tell you how much we respect what every one of you have given to our country. Because every one of you were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice and every one of you has known someone who did. We honor you by making sure in the United States Congress and working with our President that we will have leadership from the top, and we will pass the seal for freedom to our children and grandchildren. That is the way we will keep the strength of the greatest, freest, and fairest nation that was ever put on the face of the earth. Thank you for your service.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, Senator Hutchison, for that inspiring speech and for welcoming us to your state of Texas.

Now it is time to introduce to you a leader of The American Legion here in Texas who has made this National Convention possible. He led the campaign to assemble the volunteers necessary for our successful gathering. He is proud to have us in his home state and we are proud to be here. Welcome Immediate Past Department Commander, of Texas, James 'Jim' Young.

**Address: James 'Jim' Young  
Immediate Past Department Commander  
Department of Texas**

It is a real distinct pleasure to be here to extend to you the warm welcome of the state of Texas. Before we do that, my fellow Texans have asked to be given the opportunity to greet you yourselves. So I ask the Texas delegation to stand. Yea Hah!

It is a distinct honor and pleasure to welcome you to the great state of Texas and to the historic city of San Antonio for convention 2001. I represent the voices of over 86,000 Legionnaires from this vast state in greeting you. Members of the Legion voices reverberate from town like Terlingua to Tahoka, Uncertain to Uvalde, from Dalhart to Delley, from Buffalo Gap to Buda, and from Luling to Luckenbach and from other points north, south, east and west. Those that I represent range from the age of 102 to the late teens. They are all of one mind. The American Legion provides us with one of the greatest hopes available in securing America and in keeping it strong in the face of our detractors.

Texas is a vast and historic state. It blossoms with a spirit of adventure, from the rustic frontier towns to the futuristic cities capes. The very size of Texas itself sets it aside from

other states. It covers over 1/4 of a million square miles, over one fifth of the continent United States. For example, El Paso in the far western corner of the state sits closer to Los Angeles than it does to Houston. All of this spanned by 75,000 miles of highways across 254 counties. You know, it is one good thing and I am real proud of it.

We in Texas don't brag. We feel the truth about the state is hard enough to believe! It is a grand place to live and we are happy to share it with you this week. I urge you to take some time to see more of our great state while you are here. I know you are going to love it.

As we deliberate this week, let us keep in mind that we honor the memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice and those who served so that we might live to serve our country in the future. Again, I extend a warm welcome to you and I know we will have a good and productive meeting with the full knowledge that what we are doing will make a positive difference for America. My prayer for us this week is that we will honor each other, serve our country positively, and with reverence, and that we let God continue to show us the way.

**Presentation: Certification of Appreciation  
Calvin C. Turpin, National Chaplain**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The man who has served as our National Chaplain this year is truly dedicated to the principle of God and country. Our National Chaplain is an Army veteran of World War II. He is an ordained Southern Baptist minister and has served churches in California, Texas, Kentucky and Tennessee. It has been a real pleasure for me to serve with him this year. Chaplain Turpin I would like to present to you this certificate which marks your year of service. This certificate reads, "Certificate of Appreciation Presented to Chaplain Calvin C. Turpin, appointed and served as National Chaplain of The American Legion 2001. Given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion".

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN TURPIN: As I have crisscrossed America, you have been gracious in so many ways. During the year, I have been able to participate in significant and historical events. I was there for the ground breaking of the World War II Memorial, and that's my war. I was invited to stand before Congress and give the opening prayer and I joined with our Commander and two senators from Boys Nation in placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown. All of these have been significant events in my life. I thank The American Legion for the high honor of serving in this most significant office.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: It has been a real blessing for me to work with you this year. You have served us well and we wish God's blessings and good health for the rest of your time here on earth.

Our next speaker is also a Texan with deep roots. Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Crime Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. He has been named one of the one hundred most influential people in Washington, D.C. A cosponsor of the Flag Protection Amendment which passed in the House of Representatives last month. He is a graduate of Yale University and Southern Methodist University of Law. It is a honor to introduce to you the Honorable Lamar Smith.

**Address: Honorable Lamar S. Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives**

As one privileged to call San Antonio home and to represent its residents in Congress I would like to extend an official welcome to you all. I hope that you will take advantage that all of San Antonio and the surrounding area has to offer. As you explore our city, you will find a patriotic community proud to have earned the nickname "Military City U.S.A." A short distance from here you will find the Alamo. For the past 165 years, the symbol is recognized around the world of what sacrifice and bravery really mean. Those of you in this convention hall understand the real meaning of the Alamo. To others, it is symbolism. But to you, it reflects personal history.

You fought for us, each of you, in one way or another, defending the cause of liberty. Whether you kept a tank in working condition, flew sorties, or navigated a ship, you participated in the defense of liberty. When you went off to war, when you stood guard, when you kept watch late at night, you dreamed of returning home to experience the quiet freedoms. Some freedoms are boisterous and command attention; freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to bear arms. These are vital freedoms and we should never take them for granted. The most precious freedoms are the quiet ones; the freedom to sit with your grandchildren and read them a story, the freedom to gather one's family for a summertime barbecue, the freedom to travel to your favorite fishing hole, the freedom to sit in the church of your choice. These are the quiet freedoms that form the fabric of American life. You fought for these things.

I have two children in their 20s: one studies architecture, the other is studying law. These children have never had to fear that they would be drafted. They have never been asked to sacrifice their lives for our nation. You have given us an America in which the children do not have to go to war, an America where teenage boys and girls need not lay down their lives. You have given us an America that is safe and secure. Every American who moves from childhood into adulthood without having to serve is a testament to how well you did your job. You did not leave your work half done. Did not get part way and say good enough. You did not rest until the job was done and our nation was safe.

When students graduate from high school today and look ahead to college or their careers, they usually express gratitude to their teachers, coaches and to their parents. How often they forget that without your sacrifices, they too would be called to take up arms. This is the quiet freedom you have procured and I and many others like me are extremely grateful.

Given all this, I think it was my obligation recently to return the favor a couple of years ago when the VA hospital in Kerrville, a Texas hill country west of San Antonio, was threatened with closure. In 1999 we entered an era of balanced federal budgets, but a balanced budget did not have to mean a decline of quality health care, especially for our veterans. I received hundreds of letters, calls, faxes and e-mails about veterans' health care and the VA lack of responsiveness to veterans' concerns. We owe it to our veterans to have outstanding hospitals for them to keep our nation's promises to them. So I joined with the Senators from our great state in communicating directly and repeatedly with the VA to protest the downsizing or closure of the VA hospital in Kerrville. The message was simple and consistent. Our veterans deserve better. They kept their promises, we must keep our promises. We rounded up some VA officials and held a public forum on the proposed closure of the Kerrville VA facility and 1400 people showed up to discuss the issues. Some traveled as far away as 200 miles. They sent a message to the VA: veterans need quality

health care.

Two significant goals were accomplished during that three-hour town meeting. First, the VA representatives listened to veterans concerns. Veterans shared their stories and expressed how forgotten and betrayed they felt. For their part, the VA representatives acknowledged they had done a poor job explaining the VA's decision to veterans and vowed to do better. Second goal accomplished is that today, more than two years later, the Kerrville hospital is not only still open, but services have been expanded. The addition of a geriatric center for excellence, to provide comprehensive health care services to veterans of World War II and Korea, is well under way. In fact I visited the facility again yesterday.

When we stand together and show that veterans matter, America listens. It is not that Americans are opposed to veterans or opposed to health care; it just is sometimes people forget. People forget that you put on a uniform every morning to defend our freedom and sometimes they just need to be reminded. Since 1999, Congress has continued to pass substantial increases for veterans to make sure that veterans like you get quality health care and good service, whether it be in Kerrville or in your own home town. Like the cause of freedom itself, which is always either advancing or retreating, the defensive of veterans requires vigilance and watchfulness. The American Legion provides this vigilance and watchfulness in Washington, just as you provide it in your own hometowns and in your state capitals. The American Legion fights for you, just as you have fought for all of us.

In closing I would like to say thank you. Thank you for sacrificing so that our children and their children don't have to. Ours is a great nation and you have made it just that. Democracy works best when its participants are active and engaged. The democracy for which you fought is still strong and vibrant. It still allows all voices to be heard. But history can only hear those who speak and it is crucial that we continue to gently remind all Americans that you sacrificed for all those wonderful, quiet freedoms. Thank you for what you have done for us and our families.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: When we elect someone for the House of Representatives we expect them to work hard for us. Our next guest has certainly accomplished for those he represents in the San Antonio area. A member of both the House Arms Services Committee and the Veterans Affairs Committee he represents 50,000 veterans from his district very well. In the process he represents each one of us. A cosponsor of the Flag Protection Amendment in the House and a man who vigorously advocates for strengthening public education and improving benefits for veterans. Welcome Representative **Ciro D. Rodriguez**.

**Address: Honorable **Ciro D. Rodriguez**  
House of Representative**

It looks great to see all those faces down there. Mainly I want to thank The American Legion for inviting me to this 83<sup>rd</sup> National Convention. I know you had over 80 years of success. It is a first class organization and I want to thank the previous speaker for that introduction that he just gave me.

It wasn't long ago that I went before one of my schools and as I approached the school; I was running a little late. The young man said, "Mr. Rodriguez, I want to introduce you but I don't know anything about you." So I told him, "Well, just let them know I went to St. Mary's University and I got my Master's from the Lake." I noticed that the young man was a little frightened and nervous. So I went back and said, "Look, it would probably be best



that the least you could say about me, the better." So the young man grabbed the mike and said, "The least I can say about Mr. Rodriguez, the better."

So thank you for the great introduction. I commend you on your successful grassroots activism and the fact that you have 2.8 million members on the roster is a testament to your efforts to the grassroots throughout this country in behalf of our veterans. As a member of both the House Armed Services Committee and the Veterans Affairs Committee, I have had the pleasure of working with members of The American Legion in my district and as well as at the national level. I am here to attest that you have great leadership and continue to make an impact on all of our veterans in this country. I look forward to fostering this productive working relationship. I know that as we move forward we have a great deal to do.

I know that one of the basic principles and one of the main issues you have on your agenda and one of the things you want to accomplish is to make sure that we protect our flag. As you know the House passed Joint Resolution 26, the Flag Protection Amendment, which would allow Congress and the state legislation to prohibit any desecration of the U.S. Flag. I have consistently cosponsored and supported this constitutional amendment. The flag symbolizes our nation's highest values and aspirations. No other symbol has been universally honored or has been bestowed such honor as our flag. I believe the flag deserves protection as a proper emblem of our country and a symbol of freedom. I also believe very strongly that nothing proposed by this resolution will help us in assuring that it can be passed. I know that in the opinion of myself that I think that everyone has the right to protest, everyone has the right to be able to say what they please. The amendment simply would make a special provision of the American flag to protect it from physical desecration. So as we move forward, I am hoping that this piece of resolution and this effort will continue on the Senate side.

Yesterday, I also had the honor of hosting Secretary Principi at my Veterans Town Hall meeting here in San Antonio. I hold town meetings on an annual basis as well as meeting with my commanders about three times a year at the minimum. Veterans in my district, many of whom are members of The American Legion, have the unique opportunity to have their concerns addressed at the secretary level and a lot of the VA officials. An important issue that was raised at the meeting was the budget proposal passed by the House and the Senate outlining spending objectives for the key programs and agencies of the VA. In particular the veterans were disappointed with the \$1 billion or 4.5% increase in discretionary spending over last year enactment amount. Unfortunately this is just barely enough to cover the cost of inflation and provides no increases in buying power for veterans' programs and services.

The problem of course is that we have made a commitment and have a responsibility to our veterans and their families. We have been negligent in that commitment. That budget of \$1 billion is not sufficient. The cost of inflation, especially the VA, where most of their costs revolve around health, is 4.3%. So when we see a 4.5% increase, after \$1 billion, \$900 million, a little over \$900 million is basically just to take care of existing cost. So you see that we don't have sufficient resources to do any additional things.

Another area of concern addressed at the Town Hall meeting is the alarming backlog of service-connected claims, which I believe is over 600,000 members which still have claims that have not been responded to. The increased number of claims can be attributed to the several factors including the Veterans Claim Assistance Act which expanded the VA duty to assist. The VA also recently published rules that adds Type II diabetes, and for good reason, to the diseases presumed to be service-connected for certain Vietnam veterans

exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides. The VA has approved new guidelines for rating liver diseases which recognizes some disabilities associated with hepatitis C which are all are very good and it was about time we did that.

While I applaud these initiatives, they will also increase the number of people who will be seeking claims. The result is a greater number of service-connected disability claims submitted to the VA. The administration and the VA recognize this problem. I'm pleased that when we talked to Secretary Principi we have come up with a target program to target those claims and to prioritize those veterans in the twilight of their years. You are going to see that he is really going to work hard in this area. Nothing is worse than to see a veteran reach his twilight years and die before we decide on his claim. So every effort is going to be made to make sure we push forward and establish those task forces to zero in on those people who are later in their lives; over 60 and 70 to make sure that we make a decision on their claims as soon as possible.

In addition, while the number of veterans has decreased over the years, the average age of the veteran population has steadily increased and, as we know, the health care needs of the aging veteran population are more acute and long-term in nature. The VA should be commended for their efforts for improving quality of care through the community based treatment and non-institutional long term care placements and in-patient hospital settings. However, the institutional care will remain and should remain a necessary component of the VA health system. States like Texas will need to do more on their part. The state's veterans homes are a solution on meeting the needs of a lot of our veterans in states like Texas. Many states throughout the country have not fully taken advantage of those opportunities of providing those services needed out there.

Whenever I visit and speak to groups of veterans, the issue that is right on the forefront and for good reason is the issue of concurrent receipts of military retirement pay and veteran service-connected disability payments that comes. That issue needs to be dealt with and as soon as possible. Last year, Congress made some progress in this area and implemented a comprehensive solution to the current and unjust receipts of well deserved retirement and disability pay. Veterans who have retired after serving at least 20 years and have service-connected disabilities of 70% or more are eligible now to receive a cash supplement starting October 1<sup>st</sup>. The enactment provision is only a small step and we should not give up until the legislation implements full concurrent receipts of benefits is enacted. That needs to happen now.

Last year, when we had \$125 billion surplus, it didn't occur that we should not hear the excuse that we don't have the resources now. We need to make that happen. The retired and disabled veterans should not be forced to effectively finance his own disability from his earned retired pay. While the legislation has enjoyed broad bi-partisan support, the house leadership has recruited for reconsideration because of the high cost. So we need to make sure that the House side deals with it and puts it on the House floor so we can deal with it. I am hopeful that we will see more progress in regards to this particular consideration and hopefully we will see it in the Defense Authorization Bill for the year 2002 which we will expect to deal with as soon as we get back in September.

In the area of educational benefits, the military's best recruitment incentive is the Montgomery GI Bill that must be modernized to meet today's demands. The men and women who choose to serve our country in uniform should be provided the educational package that provides them the access to higher education once they complete their services. We support it and I supported the legislation that would enable the GI Bill to cover the full cost of tuition, tuition, fees and books and supplies for those who enlisted and reenlist for

four years. That needs to happen.

Our universities are costing much more. Studies that have been done here in Texas show that tuition might be low, but the fees are even higher than the tuition. The money for the Montgomery GI Bill needs to be there. The House recently passed HR 1291, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Montgomery GI Bill Enhancement Act, which moves toward the goal to access to higher education by increasing the current monthly benefits from \$650 to \$800 for the year 2002. That is \$200 increase or should I say a little less than that, but we need more than that. In addition we also looked at the \$1100 a month increase by 2004 in that specific area for tuition. While I supported this legislation I believe it is only a modest improvement, especially when you look at the rising cost associated with higher education. Unless we restore the purchasing power of the GI Bill, it will become ineffective in recruitment incentives for our military services. So we need to invest in our own soldiers, we need to invest in our own people and there is a real need in the area of education and we need to make that happen.

When you have both the presidential candidates talking about education, this is the time when we can make it happen. Both the Republicans and the Democratic talk about education and if you ask anyone in the country, the two key issues revolve around education and health. When it comes to veterans, those are the two issues we want them to respond on and we are hoping that we can make that happen. That has not been the case. But we are hoping that when it comes to health, when it comes to education, that they will be there for there for our veterans and our military personnel.

In the area of burial and funeral services, nearly 1,000 of the World War II veterans die each day. I will repeat that. More than 1,000 of the World War II veterans die each day. As these veterans pass on, it will become increasingly important to build new cemeteries and maintain existing ones. There is no getting around this. We need new cemeteries and protect the existing ones, and making sure they are well protected. The President signed legislation in May that provided a modest increase in burial and funeral allowances from \$1500 to \$2000 for services-connected with veterans and from \$300 to \$500 for non-service connected veterans. I am also pleased that the voters in Texas will also have an opportunity in a measure in November to vote for some additional resources to do that match for our veterans nursing homes in the state of Texas. Our veterans deserve an honorable resting place therefore our veterans cemetery should be maintained as well as our national shrines.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you for the services you have provided and for the service that you continue to provide for the rest of our veterans in this country. In addition, I want to ask and appeal to you that to keep hitting the elective officials, keep putting them on the spot, keep making sure that we hold everyone accountable to make sure that we make those things happen. It is not enough to come here and give you lip service; we have to show through actions, we got to show it through resources and respond to those needs.

They always say that you have to start off with a joke and end up with a joke. Let me tell you that I had an the opportunity to play golf with some of your leadership. We were out there playing golf and one of us hit that ball and it fell in an ant pit and all of these ants were all over the place. The person—I am not going to tell you who it was—swung at the ball and missed the ball. The ball was still there. The ants were all over it but here was a whole bunch of ants that got killed. The second time around he swung at the ball again and now there must have been about a million ants that were killed. But the ball was still there. Finally one of the little ants said to another, “You know what? It is apparent to me that if we are going to survive this, we will need to get on the ball”. Congratulations for being on the ball.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The second Legion leader I am about to introduce serves as the President of the Convention Corporation of Texas. He is well known to many of you. Welcome to the stage the President of The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Texas, John Morris.

**Address: John Morris, President  
The Texas National Convention Corporation**

It is truly an honor to come before you this morning on behalf of the National Convention Corporation of Texas and members of the Texas Legion family to extend to you greetings and a big Texas welcome. Welcome to the Lone Star State and your host city of San Antonio. We are indeed proud of our state and we hope that your stay here is without any problems.

As you know our purpose here is to make you feel at home, cater to your needs and help make you have a better convention. We have with us the Texas delegation, your hosts. Should you have any questions, need any assistance, please don't hesitate to go up to any Legionnaire who is wearing the star and the horn or any of the beautiful ladies of the Auxiliary, who are wearing the beautiful little collars, with the decorations. They are here also to see that you have all your needs taken care of.

It has been 14 years since this Department has had the opportunity to host a National Convention. Many of you here in the audience were present at that convention as delegates. You know that this was a very successful convention in 1987, but many things have changed for the better. You have heard previous speakers speak of the many, many sites that you need to see while you are here and enjoying yourself during the convention. Also, we have a new features. Most hotels are within walking distance of this facility. I mentioned 1987 because I want to relate to what had happened at that National Convention.

One thing that I am very proud of, and the Department of Texas, was the Texas National Corporation President who was my dear friend, and many of yours, Harvey Holcomb. The reason I mentioned his name is because immediately upon the adjournment of that convention in 1987, Harvey started to work laying the groundwork for the convention that you are having here today. Without his perseverance and dedication as a great Legionnaire, this convention might be in some other city today. So those of you who remember Harvey, remember that he had a great deal to do with this convention being held here this year.

Again I would like to say if there is anything we can do to assist your needs while you are here, don't hesitate to ask us. By all means enjoy yourself and have a safe trip home. We are looking forward to seeing each and everyone of you in Charlotte, North Carolina about this time next year.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I am pleased that we have another member on the U.S. House of Representatives with us this morning. He is a member of several congressional task forces including defense and the Missing and Exploited Children Caucus. In these areas he is able to focus his efforts on the issues that matter most to his constituents here in San Antonio and to others around the nation, the honorable U.S. Congressman, Charles Gonzalez.

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*Proceedings of Tuesday, August 28, 2001*

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**Address: Honorable Charles Gonzalez  
U.S. House of Representatives**

The first thing that I want to commend everyone on is that you are all running ahead of schedule. I have asked that you send the same people who organized this event to Washington, D.C. to give Congress a few pointers.

It is a great honor to join you here this morning because you represent the very best of what this nation could ever offer. You are the very reason that we have a nation.

My dad represented this district for 37 years and you are now in the convention center that was named after Dad. It was actually named after dad way back when they had the first part which would have been in the late '70s. He was not too happy about it because he thought one should never name a building after a living person because you never know what that person may do in the last few years of public service or whatever; you take a great risk. Well, Dad was the most honorable man who ever lived. You didn't have to agree with his politics but you knew his morale character which was so important. So for the next 20 or 30 years that he had a public service, probably the only thing that he did, that people took some issue or objection to, I never disagreed in what he did, is when he punched somebody out in a restaurant when that individual had the nerve to call my father a communist. In Texas those are fighting words.

As I welcome you here in San Antonio you need to understand that much of the success of San Antonio has been a result of individuals such as you. Members of the armed forces, in one way or another, have come to San Antonio in great numbers and have returned to San Antonio to live. So I think that for many of you out there, this is not your first visit to San Antonio. For many of you, you are saying it sure does beat basic training and I agree with that. So welcome back. For those who have never been to San Antonio, I wish you would have gotten here earlier and I hoped that you will be returning.

I commend the great work of The American Legion that historically has promoted the best interests of all our veterans, from the great accomplishments of the passing of the G.I. Bill to the forever vigilance that you all demonstrated year in and year out in Washington regarding benefits for the disabled veterans, equal treatment for our veterans when it comes for employment, securing some stability regarding the services, and what the veterans hospitals have to give and offer. And of course, to remind us on a daily basis that in the final analysis we have a lot of catching up to do in Washington for many of the broken promises to our veterans. You will continue to do that work. We will continue to listen but it takes more than just listening. We must act. Yesterday is when we should have acted. So I am hoping here today with all of the delegations being here listening to you again that it resonates, that it translates, that when we get back to Washington, we will have not forgotten the message you bring here to San Antonio today.

I want to go ahead and turn my attention to something that goes beyond the legislative needs of all the veterans of our great nation, which is itself important, do not get me wrong. It is an incredible priority, but there is something else that is gripping the nation, there is something happening out there. You will continue those efforts that I just said, but I think you are faced with a greater challenge than anyone has ever faced within your organization in the previous years. Before my election to Congress in 1998, I was troubled by what I perceived to be a general disconnect between young Americans and the history and experiences of the American veteran. I attribute this phenomena in part to the fact that many schools no longer officially observe Veterans Day. With that observance gone, so is the annual opportunity to reach American children early in their lives, to educate them about the

contributions of veterans to democracy, patriotism and liberty.

Just yesterday, I read in our local paper the following report. Around 1,200 veterans of the War die each day, meaning World War II. The Legion loses between 85,000 and 88,000 members a year from all conflicts combined, though veterans of World War II and Korea make up the majority. "We look at so many things as numbers", said American Legion National Commander Ray Smith, "but then we have to think behind every number is a person, an individual and behind every individual is a story and the sad part is a lot of the stories are never getting told. They have so many stories, so many things that they have been through." A simple statement about stories that are being lost, they are not being told. Why should that be so important to us if these are just stories? This is the way society sustains itself. This is the way society learns and passes on traditions, values and mores. This is the way society establishes priorities. So when our veterans are no longer there to tell their stories, we lose those values, we lose those priorities. We cannot let those stories not be told. If you know of a veteran who is no longer with us to tell his or her story, then tell it for them.

So that is my message to you. I am going to leave you with this one thought. We cannot let those voices be stilled or quieted for any reason and if they are, it is our fault because we have heard those stories, we appreciated their value and their importance and therefore it is our duty and responsibility to repeat those stories. Let them take hold in our families, our neighborhoods and our communities.

In 1952 Adlai Stevenson, at the American Legion Convention of 1952 said, "Men have offered their lives for their country, know that patriotism is not fear of something, it is the love of something." It is not a negative, it is a positive. You served your nation because of your love of your country, because of your faith in your country, not out of fear. There were times that you were fearful, for good reason but what motivated you was a very positive instinct. By example, you tell us what it is to love one's country. By example, you tell us what it is to serve our country in all capacities, whether in uniform or not in uniform.

Let me discuss one thing with you. This is your greatest challenge. You are faced today with a generation that, unfortunately, has been described as one that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. So when your voices are stilled and when you are quiet and you don't tell us the stories about values, that is the generation we produce as individuals. A lot of it is our fault. Your voices must rise and be heard on a daily basis. We are talking about citizenship, and that is a foreign concept to many young people today. What is citizenship? I think I should quote Senator McCann, "Citizenship is our acceptance of the duties, the loyalties, the inspiration, and habits of mind that bind us together as Americans".

So if we are not together today as Americans, this is because we have lost sight of what citizenship is and it will be our duty to remind individuals of what it is. It is not just a word; it is a way of life. John Kennedy was proud of always saying, Democracy is never a final achievement; it is a call to untiring effort to continual service". You wore a uniform once. I could see you in the street and I knew that you were serving our country. You are no longer in the service, you are no longer in uniform. You must now distinguish yourselves some other way because you will continue your duty and responsibility to this country when you are not in uniform any longer, based on lessons and sacrifices and investments you have made in the military. That is what JFK was talking about. It is a for ever opportunity with a for ever responsibility, duty, and responsibility. That is what democracy is all about.

Many of you already know the extraordinary generation that Tom Brokaw wrote about in, *The Greatest Generation*. Now I am going to go ahead and read an observation that Tom

Brokaw made, that pretty well crystalizes the challenge that we have today. How we must change society from thinking a certain way if we are to survive as the greatest democracy known to mankind. This is what Tom Brokaw said, "The World War II generation did what was expected of them, but they never talked about it. It was part of the code".

There is no more telling metaphor than a guy in a football game who does what is expected of him, makes an open field tackle, then gets up and dances around. When Jerry Kramer won the Ice Bowl in 1967\*, he just got up and walked off the field. There was no fancy dance, there wasn't a big group at the end of the field dancing and rolling the ball. There wasn't anything like that because Jerry Kramer did what was expected of him. He was supposed to block. You as veterans did what was expected of you. You defended your country, you served your country. You promoted our interests.

Today, it is a different world. We do have that generation. They know the price of everything and the value of nothing. So when they do something that should be expected of them as citizens of this great country, they believe that there should be all sorts of recognition, they should do all sorts of dances, just like the football players who score a tackle or block. That is what they are supposed to do. So this country learns that these things are expected of our citizens. Now we appreciate it that they recognize the duty of citizenship, but we should expect it. That is the only way we will impact that lesson to our children and grandchildren. I go back to what Commander Smith said, "We got to tell and retell these stories."

So when you leave San Antonio you will be better for this experience and maybe you will remember something I said and maybe you won't. But I hope that somewhere in the back of your mind you will accept a challenge that you are the voices of your brothers and sisters in uniform who are not around to tell their stories anymore. If you do that, we will have a new generation of citizens who understands the duties and responsibilities of citizenship just as you have.

**Presentation: Team American Legion  
The Eco-Challenge Special Report**

I know that all of you and the millions of American Legion members you represent are excited about all the young faces of our newest Legionnaires we meet through "Reconnect" programs with today Armed Forces. America is blessed with the energy and values they possess in full measure. I would like to call some examples of our service men and women, Legionnaires all, representing not only our beloved Legion, but also the entire Armed Forces, in world class athletic competition. I would like to ask the members of Team American Legion to join us on stage.

Mary Van Dyke, Steve Kreis, Don Kent and Mike Dunlavey, are members of the U.S. Army. Two live in Pennsylvania and serve with the U.S. Army Reserve, another serves on active duty in Arizona and the other in Oregon. They were the only military team in the 2001 Armed Forces Eco-Challenge that consisted of geographically separated members. Yet, they managed to complete the grueling race on mountain bikes, on rafts, and on foot across the rugged land in Alaska. They displayed a competitive drive and spirit that makes them as true Legionnaires. Fittingly, they dedicated their race to Army Captain Milton Palmer, a friend and comrade, who died in service to our country while training with the U.S. Army

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\* 1967 National Football League Championship The Ice Bowl, Sunday, December 31, 1967 at Lambeau Field, Green Bay Packers 21 and the Dallas Cowboys 17.

Rangers in 1995. This devotion to the memory of a fallen comrade recalls the finest traditions of The American Legion, as every delegate here certainly understands.

There is a plaque for each member of the team. The plaque reads:

Thank you for being a member of 'Team American Legion' competing in the Armed Forces Eco-Challenge on June 21-25, 2001 in Alaska.

Your willingness to face and overcome extreme physical obstacles during the 156 mile endurance trek in Alaska's interior is truly admirable. You crossed and rafted freezing, raging white water rivers. You picked your way along craggy mountainside trail, climbing snow covered mountain peaks. You peddled tedious biking routes, and clawed and navigated your way through thick stands of underbrush, trees and shrubs. Your determination was earned you personal satisfaction and achievement, as well as recognition and pride for the entire United States military.

Finishing 12<sup>th</sup> out 22 highly qualified athletic teams is a feat of great accomplishment that will provide a lifetime of individual memories, but always knowing you competed for a fallen comrade, Captain Milton Palmer, who while serving his country, died during a Ranger training accident, will be more rewarding.

Further, we, the undersigned, hereby express our grateful appreciation to you and all of your fellow citizen-soldiers in the United States Armed Forces for faithful and dedicated allegiance to the ideals of American patriotism and good citizenship.

It is signed by myself as National Commander and Bob Spanogle, the National Adjutant.

Now I call upon Mary Van Dyke to give her an opportunity to speak.

MARY VAN DYKE: I don't know about you all, but after hearing the Commander's introduction of us, I feel like I did that race all over again. I am reminded of those glacier-fed rivers and the mountain peaks that we climbed. I am also reminded of the teamwork that these young Legionnaires showed during that race. Never having met but one time before this race, four soldiers of the United States Army got together and competed for 4-1/2 days straight. No sleep, little food, little water and a lot of competition against the Air Force, the Navy and the Marines. We came together because of the spirit of The American Legion, and just the thought that we were representing not only Captain Milton Palmer but every American veteran.

This weekend, as we spoke to six different groups, we were reminded of that spirit of The American Legion and how it is being passed from generation to generation. We want you to know that through the "Reconnect" Program at its efforts that we will continue to share that spirit of The American Legion with other future young Legionnaires in today's active duty.

Now we would like to thank quite a few people who helped us get to the starting line and helped us cross that finish line and helped us to carry the spirit of The American Legion. First, we would like to present a "Team American Legion" racing cap to Commander Smith. Secondly, we would like to thank the Commander of Army Recruiting, General [Dennis D.] Cavin, for his support and his enthusiasm for being here today to support us as well.

Now in the Alaskan wilderness we got to experience not only a 150 mile race, but we got to learn more about being a Legionnaire and serving in the Department of Alaska's Legionnaires groups and Posts. We would like to thank Mr. Gene Franks, Department Commander, for all of his support and for gathering all of the Posts in Alaska to come



together to offer a picnic and an awards ceremony and greetings from Alaskan Legionnaires following the race.

Now doing all the ground work, from picking us up from the airport, to getting us to the race site and making sure we were fed and for even doing extraordinary work behind the scenes, we would like to thank a very important Alaskan Legionnaire to us, and that is Terry Huseman.

Our final American Legion racing team cap goes to Bonnie Carroll, who you make be familiar with who is the founder of TAPS, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. This organization was the sponsor for this event in Alaska. So we would like to thank Bonnie for her support.

Now in the spirit of Alaska and the spirit of adventure racing, we have created our own tokens of appreciation for those closest to us during the race and who were on the cell phone and who were on the Internet and making sure that we got to the starting line and crossed it and represented The American Legion in the most proud way that we knew how. The first person we would like to recognize with a "Team American Legion" paddle is Jack Querfeld.

The second person we would like to thank is Jim Carroll. Most of you have seen him throughout the convention far behind the camera. We not only got to see Jim chasing us around the race course, but we show Jim Carroll pitching-in in a community project held for the athletes prior to the race. Jim put down his camera, picked up the logs, picked up the shovels, picked up the hammers and did work just like a true Legionnaire. We want to thank him for that and all the support that he gave us in Alaska.

You all know this next gentleman as the "average Legionnaire." We thank Lee Harris for putting together a promotional video for "Team American Legion," for waking up with us at 6 o'clock in the morning to get those photos in the rain, and to put together that video in the wonderful "Team America" display ad that appeared in the *Army Times*, *Navy Times*, *Air Force Times*, *Marine Corps Times* and the *Federal Times*.

The person on our list is probably the most important person to us as far as getting to the starting line. Bill Sloan, who is not here with us today, who is back in Indianapolis, took a chance on these young Legionnaires. He answered my phone call all the way in January and let me just tell him about the race and what it could do for young Legionnaires and the "Reconnect" efforts. We want to carry on his spirit of taking a chance with other people and sharing the spirit of The American Legion. So thank you, Bill Sloan.

Now crossing the finish line is not the end for "Team American Legion". We would absolutely, positively enjoy being invited to speak at your Departments or your Posts. Some of you actually requested that I repeat our e-mail address which is [teamamericanlegion@hotmail.com](mailto:teamamericanlegion@hotmail.com).

**Presentation: Gary Berry  
Department of Alaska**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: While "Team American Legion" was competing and fighting off mosquitoes in the wilderness of Alaska, they relied on the support and backing of volunteers from the Department of Alaska. Commander Gary, thank you and your Alaskan Legion family for your support of "Team American Legion" and all the Armed Forces teams. Please accept this plaque as a token of our appreciation for your efforts. The plaque is inscribed: "Still Serving America appreciation certificate. Presented on behalf of the national organization and its membership of over 2,700, 000 veterans of wartime duty to the American legion of Alaska."

Thank you for your support and cooperation at the 2001 Armed Forces Eco-Challenge. You were instrumental in making it a successful experience for all involved. Your efforts continue to demonstrate the credo of The American Legion through devotion of mutual helpfulness." It is signed by myself and attested to by our National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle.

We are presenting this to the new Department Commander of Alaska, Gene Franks.

**Presentation: Bonnie Carroll  
Volunteer Recognition**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Next, I'd like to ask [Alma] Terry Huisman to come forward. We owe her special thanks for taking on the role of Event Chairperson for The American Legion and supporting not only our team, but also the entire Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors — TAPS — and Eco-Challenge organizations. TAPS is a program that was started by Bonnie Carroll, a widow of an Air Force officer who died in a plane crash on active duty. Terry, I have a plaque for you, which reads: "Volunteer Recognition for excellence in serving above and beyond expectations. Presented on behalf of the grateful members of The American Legion for outstanding contributions with the Armed Forces Eco-Challenge project, held in Alaska on June 21-26, 2001."

I mentioned Bonnie Carroll and the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors just a moment ago. This remarkable woman is with us today. Through her personal experience she saw a special need for families who had lost a loved one on active duty. She turned her energy to helping meet that need and TAPS was born. Bonnie, please come forward. I have a presentation I'd like to make to you. This plaque reads: "Thank you for working on behalf of the hundreds of families who lose loved ones each year in the line of military duty. Your efforts to establish and facilitate a healthy healing process for families, and to provide aid and comfort to the children of our fallen comrades are in the finest traditions of service to our country."

"Further, we, the undersigned, hereby express our grateful appreciation to you and all of the members of your organization for faithful and dedicated allegiance to all the members of the Armed Forces of the United States."

It is signed by myself as National Commander and attested to by our National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle.

Now I'd like to personally thank all Legionnaires, members of the American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion of the Con Miller Post 30 in North Pole, Alaska; Dorman H. Baker Post 11 and C. Russell Huber Post 57 both of Fairbanks, Alaska; and Post 17 in Kodiak, Alaska for making the Eco-Challenge such a huge success for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors and Team American Legion. Not only did they serve and support our team; they also fed every single team from all of the Armed Forces, as well as the staff of the TAPS organization, television crews from Eco-Challenge Productions and all the rest of the media attending the event in Alaska. The plaque for each post reads: "Presented to recognize your contributions with the Armed Forces Eco-Challenge held in Alaska on June 21-26, 2001. Your support made a distinct difference and helped to make this environmental challenge competition a celebrated experience for the participants, providing them a lifetime of memories."

Thank you for caring and sharing. Your efforts demonstrate unselfish service to America's veterans and illustrate the principle of working above and beyond the call of duty, exemplifying our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

General Cavin, thank you for taking part in this presentation. We are very proud of each and every member of today's military active duty, National Guard and Reserve. The members of "Team American Legion" compete and win in tough competitions like this all over the country. They represented us well in Alaska, and I'd like us all to show our appreciation for a job well done.

Since we have just presented awards to five very special members of today's Armed Forces and have recognized the members of "Team American Legion" now is a good time to reinforce for each of you why we share a deep bond with those in uniform.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Each year The American Legion selects a city to host the National Convention. It is a big challenge and an opportunity for the best city. This morning, as we gather in San Antonio, for business and fully recovered from our parade on Sunday. We are honored to have the Mayor Pro Tem of this fine city greet us.

**Address: Honorable Julian Castro  
Mayor Pro Tem of San Antonio, Texas**

On behalf of the Mayor, the city council, and especially the residents of San Antonio I want to welcome you to San Antonio. For those of you who have had the opportunity to serve at one of our bases, Kelly, Lackland, Brooks, Randolph; welcome back to San Antonio. We are glad to have you again. I promise I don't need a chaperone to stand up here. My looks notwithstanding, I got a hall pass to be here today with you. Actually I have the privileged of serving for the next two months as Mayor Pro Tem. I just wanted to comment, thank you for being with us, and also to tell you a little bit of our city, especially it is so fitting for your convention here today.

You probably couldn't have chosen a more appropriate setting for The American Legion Convention. From its beginning, San Antonio's progress has been tied, I dare say by more than any other Texas city and perhaps more than any other American city, to the contributions of veterans and heroes. San Antonio, as we know it now, was originally founded by the Spanish in the 1700s as part of its strategy to combat the westward movement of the French. It was set up as a missionary/fort-style city and from that time it has been the location of many great battles, most particularly in the 1800s, the Alamo. I don't think there is any better symbol of folks coming together from all backgrounds to fight and to stand up and rise in defense of liberty.

From that time on, San Antonio has benefitted from being Military City U.S.A.; having Kelly, Brooks, Randolph, Lakeland, where I am sure many of you have some fond memories and not fond memories of basic training. Even today, there is a legacy of that military presence. Many of you know the corporate presence of USAA and some of the high tech companies sprouting up in San Antonio. All of that has been due to the presence of the military. This is a city that remembers and appreciates and thanks all of you for the contributions you have made, whether you have been in the city before or if it is your first time.

A few weeks ago, I think on July 13<sup>th</sup>, a whole bunch of us actually stood and watched the closure of Kelly Air Force Base, July 13<sup>th</sup> marked its closure and its conversion to a new manufacturing business and research center. That closing it was a terrific remember to myself—if I can say on a personal note as a young person at the age of 26—of how much our veterans contributed, not just to San Antonio, but to my generation.

Earlier Congressman Gonzalez challenged you to keep telling the stories of those who

can not be with us now, those veterans who stood up bravely for what they believed in. As a young person, I recall the words of John F. Kennedy in his inaugural speech, when he said that the torch had been passed to the new generation and also very interestingly that it was a generation tempered by war. Mine is not a generation tempered by war mostly and it is devoid of the kind of memories many of you have and many of you have learned from. Because of that, I hope that you take to heart that challenge and keep on teaching us everything that we need to know to go forward with those values of citizenship. Fight for freedom and believe every moment that we can make America a better place. Be ready to stand up and say, "This is the greatest country." It is exactly folks like you who have protected that and made it sure that my generation has the opportunity to live in peace.

So welcome to San Antonio. I hope you have a great time here and I look forward to seeing you back here again soon.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: For more than thirty years our next guest has served in Army green. Today he is responsible for a command that spans the nation, finding the young men and women who share his core values. As the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, he can look back to his first assignment as a platoon leader at Ft. Bliss, Texas in the summer of 1990. His career has taken him to Korea and Germany, as well as more than a half dozen stateside installations. Welcome a member of University Post 69, of Martin Tennessee, Major General Dennis Cavin.

**Address: Commanding General Dennis D. Cavin  
U.S. Army Recruiting Command**

What a great honor it is for this old country boy to be in the midst of such distinguished Americans. Thanks for the kind introduction. I am here to do one thing—to give you a stockholder's report on your Army and our efforts of recruiting.

Now I know many of you got up early this morning in the hotel. I saw many of you eating early, exercising and many of you had an opportunity to read this morning's *San Antonio Express-News*. How many of you made it to the back page for the "For Sale" ads? Did any of you get back in that neck of the woods? I took a little time and found this very interesting "for sale" ad. "For Sale, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 40 volumes, excellent condition. \$1,000 or best offer. No long needed. Got married last weekend; wife knows everything." Now I hope you will let me come back tonight wives.

When Commander Smith got up at the intro this morning he talked about The American Legion's great success in recruiting and that, in fact, you have turned the tide. I am here to tell you your Army has turned the tide. We will declare success for Army recruiting next Tuesday by enlisting a young soldier from San Antonio, Texas as an 11 x-ray [sic] ranger airborne soldier. So San Antonio can be proud of our 75,850 enlistee.

*[Speaker illustrates his talk by calling for slides.]*

You are familiar with the Army, 226 years of service, a year longer than our nation. You're also familiar with its values and what it does for America's young men and women, taking cross-sections of Americans from all walks of life regardless of what are their ethnicity, their race, their backgrounds. And after a period of service, we return to America a better citizen than we got, citizens just like you, citizens who always answer to call. Our Army is proud of a number of things, but most importantly we are proudest of its greatest generation, those of you sitting in this room and the generations that have served since that time.

Recently the Army launched its new advertising campaign on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January of this year. One of the things we realized is that the Army lacked a clear definition, a clear brand. So this definition that I am going to show you is something that has driven us over the past several months in our advertising and in our inculcation of the spirit of serving as a soldier, the world's most respected, most feared ground force.

Now realize I am taking liberty that I expect Brigade General Deal is in the audience somewhere, my counterpart in the Air Force recruiting. So Duane don't steal any of the good ideas.

Next point. We believe strongly in the soldiers ability to think and take decisive action to lead themselves and others in peace and in combat. To accomplish a mission; we do it everyday and we have done it everyday since this organization was created 226 years ago. We train soldiers and we grow leaders. McDonald's doesn't do that. Ford Motor Company doesn't do that. Your United States Army, and I might add Air Force, Marines and Navy do the same thing.

Lastly, the Army equips our soldiers to win in combat. Now I will tell you the Army is changing from the Cold War paradigm. But we do a couple of things everyday. First of all, we still guard the Tomb of the Unknowns, everyday. Your Army builds character, one soldier at a time. We still qualify crews and squads in the sweat and grim of our training centers, like one of our training centers one of our representatives represent us today comes from. We still come from and live in every village and town in America just like The American Legion. Thank you for your service to our country. We're proud to continue your tradition. I would tell you that your Army does, has and always will respect the great service of the individual soldier, male or female. Thank you kindly. We are proud to do that.

I will quickly go to the stockholders report that I told you about. The mission of Army recruiting is pretty simple: to recruit, with integrity, high quality young men and women to meet the needs of our nation's Army. My job to carry that out is to care for the men and women who serve as Army Recruiters.

We do come from every village and town across America and we have representatives from most of them. To many of you, an Army Recruiter is the Army because there are no military installations close at hand. This depicts where we exist all across America, the 50 states and many locations overseas. Roughly about 12,000 people are involved in Army Recruiting, most soldiers, non-commissioned officers, officers and our great civilians. Last year, your 2000 Army was successful. We enlisted over 11,000 more soldiers last year than in the previous year and, as you may know, the Army missed its recruiting mission in 1999. As I said just a few minutes ago, we will achieve our mission this year, one month early. This is great news for each and every organization.

We have involved a tremendous number of better business practices. When you look at the slide, it talks about the decline in the DEP loss rate. DEP is the Delayed Entry Program. We are saving soldiers who signed up and chose to come in a little bit later at much greater rates than we have had in the past. We will exceed our goals for this year. The momentum is on the way for FY02 in grand fashion.

What do we attribute the success to this year? First off, it comes from the great support from of the Army senior leadership, from the Secretary of Army, through the Chief of Staff of the Army and all the way down to posts and camps all around our nation and by your support as well. Secondly, by the hard work of the recruiters themselves, their competence and confidence to get the job done. They know this is important work and they are, in fact, all pulling for the Army. Next, our Army advertising campaign, "An Army of One" is succeeding. I will talk a little more about that because I suspect there may be a few of you

who haven't quite bought into that thought yet.

We have driven the youth of America to the Internet to communicate with us because that is where they get their information today, on the Internet, all hours of the day and night. The "Total Army:" everyone is involved helping us to do our job and we are most appreciative of it.

The next slide is our home town recruiter program, where we bring young Americans who have enlisted in the Army back to their home towns as Privates, to talk about their experiences. That is paying great dividends for us.

Finally, is our involvement with companies and industries and partnerships with businesses around America which some of which you are very familiar with. I often get asked about the quality of the force. Let me tell you that the quality of the force is doing just fine. We measure quality on a number of attributes. One is how an individual tests out in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. As you can tell, we are about 63.1% right now and I expect that to grow a little bit toward the end of the fiscal year. We have always measured success in the form of our high school diploma grad conversion rate. As you can tell we will exceed the mandated 90%. I expect us to come in at about 91% this fiscal year.

Next is our test category 4. Generally speaking, that is the lowest mental category that we can take into the Army. If you look at the chart, you can tell we will come in at less than 2% this year. Let me remind you of one simple thing. Look at the little bar code on the far side there. During the period of Desert Shield/Desert Storm our Army was roughly 4-6% mental category 4. I thought it was a pretty good Army. I still think it is a pretty good Army and we are even better than we were then.

And lastly, we measure the quality of our force by the number of college individuals; individuals that have gone to college and then either dropped out or graduated from college. As you can tell this year, we are exceeding last year and the stretch mark for next year is also high.

We are a diverse Army. We have some work to do as we look particularly at our recruiting in the Hispanic community. If you look on the charts, you can tell that the population we are interested in is the 17 to 21 year-olds. The population is roughly 14% of America's population. Inside the Army we are only 8% Hispanic. It has absolutely nothing to do with quotas; it has everything to do with who will be the Sergeants Major, who will be the battalion commanders in the year 2020. We want to provide opportunity across the spectrum of America's population that can be each represented and will be role models for the future. I won't go into detail here, but I will simply tell you that we do have a strategy to penetrate the Hispanic markets where we have not been successful in the past with specific programs geared to provide information and opportunity to this group of individuals that we are seeking to recruit.

Let me talk to you a little bit about tomorrow's soldier. They are your grandchildren right now. I would take a little bit of exception with the couple of the speakers who talked about today's generation. When I look at the generation we are recruiting, the 17 to 21 year-olds; we look at what we call the prime market. When you cancel out all of those individuals who are not eligible for enlistment, General Deal, Admiral Foley, and those others who are in the recruiting business along with me. We are looking at a prime market that is down to about 1.4 million males. That makes it a tough business and I will tell you that industry is looking for the same kind of individual. At the same time, when you add the propensity since Desert Shield/Desert Storm for serving in your Armed Forces you can tell that the propensity continue to decline. For the slight of turn in the couple of services in 1999. Of that group when you look at the future generations, the generation that follows Generation

X, some have been known as Generation Y. We are now calling them the Millennial.

Those young Americans born after 1982. What do they tell us? We have done some research and I would like to take a little bit of issue of the Congressman. I would tell you that they are departing from the historic patterns of Generation X. Where Generation X had high crime rate, high drug rate, high teenage pregnancy, you name it and everything was headed in the wrong direction. Take a look at what is going on with America's youth today. They believe in team sports, they believe in being involved and, ironically, though some of you might want to take issue with this, they were also optimistic and they do follow rules. The Millennial talk about themselves frequently. Here is what they tell us.

They are optimistic, they are happy and confident. They are team players as I just said. They accept authority, they expect parental guidance and parental discipline. As I said earlier we are seeing the trends declining for this particular group of youth. In the book\* written by Dr. Howe and Dr. Strauss, they classify this group of Millennials as potentially America's next greatest generation. A generation just like yours. A generation that this nation will call upon in a time of peril and they will in fact stand up and be counted.

I would like to divert for just a second and talk about the Army's new advertising campaign. A lot of people ask me why not "Be all that you can be"? After all that was a jiggle and a slogan that stayed with the Army for 20 years. It is the second most recognized advertising campaign in the century, beaten only by McDonald's, "You deserve a break today". So why not keep this grand "Be all that you can be" slogan? Simply today's youth did not connect with the slogan and do not connect like my generation did. They felt that it was speaking to them in a parental way, "like you go and go be all that you can be". So we created the Army of One campaign. We did it after about talking to 11,000 individuals in the age group we were interested in recruiting, the 17 to 21 year olds. What we have discovered since the campaign came out one word, "An Army of One". You focus on that because you know that the Army is not one, there is no I in team. Trust me, I have all of the reasons and rationales. What today's youth is an Army of One. They see the whole sentence.

After talking to Coach Lou Holtz, he kind of explained it to me in this way. At South Carolina he is looking for someone that can come to join his football team who comes with the vigor, the fire in the belly, the belief that on any given Saturday they can beat Clemson University with one arm tied behind their back, all by themselves. I am here to tell you that your Army is looking for that same kind of individual that you are looking for, individuals that values themselves and believe that the Army will value them as an individual first and then as a team member second. Believe me it is working.

If you haven't been to [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com) and you have a computer within a couple of miles of your home or your office, I ask you go do that. It is a tremendous portal into opportunities that exist for our young Americans today. We advertise using basic training series, sixth grade individuals who we followed through the nine weeks of their training. You can capture that same excitement and frustration if you go to that web page. By the way, in the lower right hand corner there, if you happen to click on the cadence jukebox you will hear the 82th Air Borne singing Cadence and that will make you have a great day, I can assure you.

How are we doing? These statistics simply tell you things are going very well or else we would not be declaring mission success a week from today. Leads are up from all sources. One of the most exciting things we got going is our chat room and our cyber

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\* *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, by Neil Howe and William Strauss, published by Vintage, 2000.

recruiting station. About a year ago I had four non-commissioned officers who were talking to America's youth on the Internet, using a chat room email. Today, I have thirty individuals communicating with your sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and that is our most productive source of leads. It is, in fact, an operations center not unlike the one you may have seen in many, many tents in combat zones around our Army. We operate just the same way. People are volunteering to come talk to us and that is the kind of individual we want to enlist in the Army.

I want to stop now and take about three minutes and let you look at a video and this great business of recruiting and the product America is providing us, his sons and daughters.

... Video plays at this time.

MAJOR GENERAL DENNIS D. CAVIN: Does that make you feel good about your Army?

When you came in this morning there were individuals passing out a pin that we are providing to each of our veterans around the nation. If you didn't get one, they will be in the back later. Hopefully you will wear it proudly, regardless of whether you are in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines as a veteran. It is our way of simply saying thanks to you for your service to our nation and your continued service to your communities.

You know I never leave an audience without asking them to do something for me. How can you help? You heard the Congressman talking about speaking out on behalf of American veterans and I totally support that. I would ask you to continue that great work. Pick up one of those pocket recruiter guides in the back before you leave today or tomorrow and learn about your Army. Visit your local recruiters; your Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines recruiting stations. Those folks are out there on point and sometimes they don't get patted on the back very often. Stop in and just say thank you for the work they are doing.

Help us to get into the high schools around America, some of which do not allow Armed Forces recruiters to come inside their doors. Yet they will allow industry and other organizations to recruit on our campuses. Tell the students and the educators what you experienced of having served, what it was all about. They are good experiences. They are life changing and life building experiences. Lastly continue to spread the news about an "Army of One". Thank you for serving our nation.

I do have one other small item. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July this year there was a funeral conducted in California. As many of you saw on the monologue this morning many of our veterans receive their burial services from other veterans. It so happened on this day, there was a young Sergeant who was at a grave site, having completed a funeral service, an interment service. She looked across the cemetery at a lone casket with an American flag draped over it, with no military honors there. This Sergeant, typical of today's non-commissioned officer of all of the branches, went over to the individual running the funeral and asked if the family might like to have a service with military honors. They were overcome and said absolutely.

The individual's son took the time to write a letter to President Bush on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, extolling the great virtue of this non-commissioned officer and her team for having the intuitiveness, if you will, to see an opportunity to award a veteran for his service to his nation. He happened to be a veteran of Bastogne, who was being buried without proper military honors. I am going to take just a minute now and read just a section of that letter that was written to the President and then I am going to request, as you bear with me, as I award this Sergeant a meritorious service medal.

"I am writing to you to bring to your attention and to recognize a truly great soldier. My father was a veteran of the 506 Infantry Regiment of 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne in the United States



Army. In the December of 1944 he fought for his country in the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne, Belgium. On 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2001 he died rather suddenly. It occurred to me that my father, a proud soldier, would have loved so much a military presence at his funeral. On the day before the funeral it seemed to me that there was no chance to arrange for a military service. With the flag on his coffin and his Screaming Eagle's pin on his lapel, his funeral took place as planned. Following the funeral at the church I drove behind the hearse to the cemetery and learned that a military honor was not only available, but had asked if they might participate. I cannot tell you what it meant to me to hear those words when I was handed the flag. 'On behalf of the President of the United States, I thank your loved one for the service he has provided to this nation.'

"Staff Sergeant Rebecca Calleja is a truly kind, caring and professional soldier. She is one who truly respects those who have gone before her to fight for the freedoms we have today. When she said to me, 'Your father served to protect the freedoms that I have,' I was very moved. Her words struck me very deeply and underscored not only the importance of recognizing the contributions of all veterans, but of appreciating what we have in this great nation, including its history." Signed sincerely, Dr. John D. Shields.

Would you please welcome Staff Sergeant Rebecca Calleja.

MAJOR GENERAL DENNIS CAVIN: Attention to Orders: The Meritorious Service Medal is awarded to Staff Sergeant Rebecca B. Calleja for exceptionally meritorious achievement while serving with distinction as a non-commissioned officer in charge of the California National Guard Funeral Support Detail on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2001. Staff Sergeant Calleja selfless action of that day assured that an honored American veteran received a fitting tribute as he was laid to rest. Her performance of duty truly exemplifies the ethos of the American soldier and personifies the rich heritage of the non-commissioned officer corps. Staff Sergeant Calleja's exemplary efforts and accomplishments bring distinct honor to American veterans, the California National Guard, and the United States Army." Signed Dennis D. Cavin, Major General, United States Army Command.

#### **Presentation: Spirit of Service Awards**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, General Cavin. Please remain on stage. I ask for your assistance with the next order of business. In 2000, The American Legion introduced the Spirit of Service Award. As an organization of wartime veterans, we know about service to others. We also know that those in uniform today often go out of their way to make a difference in their communities where they live. The Spirit of Service Award recognizes one member of each branch of service for their volunteerism.

Our first award goes today to Private First Class Jousette Durkop, of Fort Irwin, California. The details of PFC Durkop's volunteer efforts take more than two pages, single spaced, to explain. She spends much of her waking hours on the weekends, helping with her church and fund-raising to benefit teenagers. Through her leadership, fifteen young people were able to make a trip to Mexico to help build schools. She also gives of her time and talent to other faith-based efforts near Fort Irwin and via the Internet with her home church in Alaska. It is obviously that PFC Durkop cares about people and deserves the Spirit of Service Award for a member of the United States Army.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS GASSED DURKOP: I really don't have any idea what to say. First, and foremost I want to thank my mom. She took five different planes to get here from the Arctic Coast to see me get my award and that means a lot to me. I want to thank my dad back home who is retired military and everyone back at Fort Irwin. It has been a

tough year out there, but they have all been with me every step of the way. I have had some wonderful leaders and I hope that little by little I can follow my mom's footsteps and make a difference in people's lives the way she has in the people's lives that she has touched.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The next Spirit of Service Award is for Aerographer's Mate Second Class Anjail F. Weaver, of Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida. Where to start in describing her volunteerism is a difficult decision. Through her leadership and infectious enthusiasm, she recruited more than two hundred Navy volunteers to help with the 2001 Special Olympics in Jacksonville. She helped raise \$10,000 for the Salvation Army Bell Ringer Project. She donates two hours a week at the Jacksonville City Rescue Mission. Petty Officer Weaver is involved with the Junior Achievement Program and has a strong interest in mentoring 3rd and 4th grade students. She has positively touched thousands of lives in the Jacksonville area. Her boss wrote that she is most deserving of the Spirit of Service Award. I couldn't agree more. Congratulations Petty Officer Weaver. Thank you for your excellent service and example.

PETTY OFFICER ANJAIL WEAVER: This is a wonderful honor and I would really like to thank The American Legion for really making me feel like a part of the family here. Everyone has been really nice and I am really proud to be a member of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The next recipient of the Spirit of Service Award is from the United States Marine Corps. Sergeant Charles T. Crossfield is assigned to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. An area of the country that I am quite familiar with, I might add. Yet, I must admit he receives this award for his volunteer spirit while stationed at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Let me run down a list of his community involvement: the North Hardin Hope Holiday Can Food Drive; a guidance counselor for the Hardin County Youth Mentorship Program; assistance sport coach for youth little league basketball, baseball and football; acting advisor for two elementary schools in their DARE program; waging a personal crusade to make kids aware of the detrimental effects of drugs; and finally, besides doing all this on his own, he encourages his fellow Marines to do the same. Congratulations Sergeant Crossfield.

SERGEANT CROSSFIELD: First off, I want to thank the members of The American Legion, Headquarters Marine Corps., Captain Butler and the people of San Antonio. You treated us great since we have been here and again I am now a proud member of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: For the United States Coast Guard, the 2001 Spirit of Service Award is presented to Food Service Specialist Second Class Charles Martin. Stationed at the Air Station in Clearwater, Florida. FS2 Martin is recognized in his leadership in Seward, Alaska, his previous assignment. During his two years in Alaska he gave more than 250 hours to Seward's Volunteer Fire Department. There he augmented the department's on-call Emergency Medical Technician. He volunteered to support the Annual Mount Marathon race during the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday period. While on vacation he is credited for saving thousands of dollars for a local business when a fire broke out. Another time, while on vacation, he was one of the first on the scene at a head-on collision. His quick action until medical help arrived, soothing the victims until help arrived. It is a distinct honor to present this award to FS Martin for leadership by example and strengthening the bond between the military and the civilian community.

FOOD SERVICE SPECIALIST SECOND CLASS CHARLES MARTIN: I thank all the Legion members and give a special thanks to Alaska and Kentucky, my home town. It is an honor to be here and I am also proud to be a new Legion member.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Our final 2001 Spirit of Service Award winner is Staff Sergeant Joseph Cormier. Sergeant Cormier is assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron at Hurlbert Field in Florida. This Air Force professional is a selfless community volunteer. He and his wife managed a foster home for local area mentally and physically challenged adults. When one of them could not live without support, the family adopted him. He has been coaching bowling for the Okaloosa County Special Olympics since 1995. He played Santa for his handicapped son's workshop annual Christmas party. He spends Veterans Day at the Bay Breeze Nursing Facility, sharing important time with veterans living there. And he helped raise more than \$20,000 in Operation Warm Heart, a program to assist needy families within his own Air Force community. Sergeant Cormier, you are highly deserving of The American Legion's Spirit of Service Award.

STAFF SERGEANT JOSEPH CORMIER: Thanks for the honor of this award. I am really happy that my wife's name was mentioned because if it wasn't for her, none of this probably would be possible for me. The American Legion has been a great host. The city of San Antonio has been a great host and I want thank each and every one of you for making me feel welcome. I am proud to be a member of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Since we have just presented awards to five very special members of today's Armed Forces and have recognized the members of Team American Legion, now is a good time to reinforce for each of you while we share a deep bond with those in uniform.

#### **Video: "Who's Wearing My Uniform"**

Who among us can deny that when we look in the mirror each morning we do see a younger version of ourselves. No wrinkles, physically fit, ready to dawn our uniform for another day.

Way back when Uncle Sam took the place of parents. When it was time to eat Uncle Sam fed us, when we needed a place to live Uncle Sam provided it. Uncle Sam's place was our home.

Twenty-five years ago to field an all volunteer military, comprised of men and women, professionals who would serve and sacrifice. The inducement: Uncle Sam would take care of them and their families. A quarter century later the cold hard facts of life for the all volunteer are crystal clear. Military recruiting commercials on television sell the sizzle, but those commercials ignore the substance, including low pay, inadequate housing and second rate benefits. Some hunted, once whipped, this is television, not reality. I guess reality is left to be discovered once the contract is signed. Despite the downside, men and women continue to make military service a career just as many of you did, but they are being shortchanged.

Most of us hung up our military uniform long ago. We never expected to put it on again except for a Veterans Day parades, then we carefully put it back in the closet to wait for another day. Yet if you think about it, when we took our uniforms off, someone else in our community put one on. Someone volunteering to serve and sacrifice for America. Someone a lot like us. Visit any military installation and you will see those uniforms being worn as proudly today as in our time. Yes, those in uniform are younger just as we were. They are not strangers, they are our comrades. They live in the same neighborhoods and communities as we do. You don't even need to visit a military base. These modern day warriors proudly serve in the National Guard and Reserves and they are being called on frequently to fill critical missions for our nation's over-deployed and under-funded military.

Let me tell you the conversation I overheard while a group of Legionnaires were visiting a Army fort. An officer asked a Vietnam veteran when he had joined the Army. The answer came quickly, "1963, I trained in the artillery." The officer suppressed a smile and responded. "Sir, that is the same year I was born." Undeterred, the Vietnam veteran said he began his service on a 105 millimeter Holister. "Where are they now?," he asked. "Why Sir, one was sent to a museum for visitors to see and others are in the salvage yard with the sign that says, 'Take me', hanging from the tube."

With a twinkle in his eye the officer patted the Vietnam veteran on the shoulder and introduced him to some of his younger troops. Later, that Vietnam veteran got to thinking about meeting the troops and that "Take Me" sign. Could it be that sign was in reality a plea? "Take Me" could also be a bond, a relationship. Right now The American Legion and our family members in the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion need to take the members of today's military under our wing and into our fold. We must be their advocates. Why? Two words. Broken promises.

Our children and grandchildren in uniform can't say what they feel. They have no voice of their own in Congress, but The American Legion family does. They can't lobby Congress, they can't even lobby their own Congressman, but The American Legion family can. Why were promises broken? Money! Once again, our nation's security and the promises to our warriors fall victim to the power struggle by law makers over the almighty dollar. In 1975 it was easy to make promises. No one knew the cost of the all-volunteer force.

A quarter century later when budget cuts are needed, where do they start? Oh, sure they make them in so called "nonessentials", like new or renovated housing, required training, dependent medical care and war. Nonessentials? Nonsense! Quality of life and training issues are essential to those called upon to perform their mission. Why? Just consider a few of the main reasons. Sixty percent of our military are married with children today. Many of them are two income families. Some by choice, but too many of them by necessity. Too many military families must also rely upon government programs, such as "Women, infants and children (WIC)", to feed their young families. Military hospital care for dependents, once a major recruiting incentive, is now relegated to history. In most locals family medical care must be sought outside the installation. What used to be free to military families now cost money under the TRICARE insurance plan.

This money must come from the pockets of those in uniform. That's not right! Twenty-five years ago women were just 2% of the military population. Today, women serve in greater numbers and fill important leadership positions. Now these facts all underscore our need in The American Legion family to make it known that changing force structure and changing missions equate to changes to what is considered "nonessential".

Before you rush to blame lawmakers with this shameful situation, remember it is we, the citizens of America who wanted the all-volunteer force, inherited such a force and is a commitment by we the people to support the troops. Today, Americans have what they wanted, but they are not telling their electives that they are willing to pay for it. Frankly, the idea that Uncle Sam covers it all for our warriors of today is nothing more than a myth. Despite the broken promises, despite the family hardships, despite better income opportunities in the highly technical workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, some of America's brightest young men and women continue to join the military. They put on those uniforms we once wore. They leave home without many people in the community knowing that they are gone. They still care about each other, their families and this country. Those are the same cares that led to the founding of The American Legion.

Today the world has changed. The military has changed. Even The American Legion family has changed. But constant across the generations in our families of millions is the steadfast principle of "service first". It makes no difference that military professionals are in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force. They are wearing your uniform and they are wearing my uniform. They are willing to serve our nation, willing to die for freedom if necessary. They have earned the right to belong to the greatest veterans' organization.

The American Legion calls it "Reconnect". A solid example of "Reconnect" in action can be seen in Minnesota. The Adjutant General of Minnesota told The American Legion two of the biggest challenges were finding drill weekend daycare for children of Guard Reserve members and helping families when units deploy. That statement triggered an American Legion family reaction in Minnesota's District One. Posts in the District have adopted several Guard and Reserve Units. They have offered free daycare on drill weekends to anyone that has requests it and when it time for the Units to deploy, they attend send off gatherings to make certain families left behind know they can call on The American Legion family at any time for help.

My uniform still hangs in the closet. It doesn't fit. It serves as a reminder that someone of a younger generation is taking my place, keeping the bonds of service strong, bonds which transcend the centuries. Some may serve to have a job, still others may serve to earn college money, but it doesn't take long in talking with today's military for members to learn that they do share our values. "I have taken a lot from this country and I thought this out very carefully before I signed up and joined the Reserves. I didn't want to be a full time professional soldier, I'm a citizen first, but I wanted to be prepared in case my country needed me so that I could help protect what I have been blessed with."

Eighty-two years ago The American Legion began constructing a bridge between veterans and our lawmakers. Successive generations of wartime veterans carefully maintained and modernized that bridge with the help of the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. It is no secret why we do what we do. The emotion remains unchanged from 1919 to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

"We pledge our unrelenting vigilance on behalf of our comrades in arms, their children and their widows and orphans". "We have found the American flag to be soul unifying symbol of these United States, a nation born of diversity and nurtured in the shadow of that banner, which the honors remains the countless heroes lay to rest, deserving in need be of our protection until death." "We affirm to generations as yet unborn their due inheritance, a legacy no less great than to which today we are heirs. A nation strong, united and flourishing in peace and prosperity." "We affirm to our nation's defenders and the citizens they serve our dedication to nation sovereignty and to security so invaluable as to render America forever free from aggression and domination by those that would do us harm." "We are affirmed the principles of citizen soldiery by our support and dedication to those who stand ready prepared as to the call to arms, the Reserves and National Guard Forces, and we affirm to all the Americans our commitment to principle of government, 'Of the people, by the people and for the people,' a principle thus embodied by Congress and tethered and free from foreign influence and ever alert to the failures of foreign policy by which the constraints on war are loose." "By the witness of man and in the presence of Almighty God, we do hereby commend this affirmation to all and that these sentiments ring true."

For The American Legion family, one of the greatest opportunities is to go to the troops, talk with them, hear first-hand of their concerns. Active duty, National Guard, Reserves, they need our advocacy. We need their youthful energy. In the morning, take a

good look in the mirror, check out your old uniform, and ask yourself, "who's wearing my uniform today?" The answer will certainly surprise you. But you never will know until you take the first step to "Reconnect."

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Our next speaker is no stranger to American Legion National Convention. He has been here before as Staff Director of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs. Today, he is the Secretary of Veteran Affairs. He's a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, a Vietnam veteran who commanded a river patrol unit in the Mekong Delta. He's also a member of The American Legion Post 17 in Kodiak, Alaska. Please welcome the Honorable Anthony J. Principi.

**Address: Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs**

Just over 150 years ago in the heart of this beautiful city, nearly 200 men came together to defend a place they call The Alamo. Badly outnumbered, half starved, many of them ill, they fought and they died as heroes. During the battle, the commander of the Fort, Lieutenant Colonel William Barry Travis sent a message to the people of Texas and all Americans of the world. He wrote, "The Enemy has demanded surrender. Otherwise the garrison is to be put to the sword if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot and our flags still waves proudly over the wall. I shall never surrender or retreat. Victory or death."

The enemy was far too numerous and Colonel Travis was not victorious. But the Colonel was as good as his word. He did not surrender and he did not retreat. He and Jim Bowie, and Davy Crockett and everyone of the 183 men who were here, gave their lives to Texas. Texas has never forgotten that. The memories honored here and will be forevermore.

There are many ways to honor those who have paid the ultimate price in defense of freedom. Here in San Antonio, the Alamo is a national shrine, visited by thousands everyday. Memorials to those who have died in America's wars can be found everywhere, from the Punch Bowl in Hawaii to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, D.C. VA's national cemeteries are our national shrine to those who have served or have sacrificed on behalf of their nation. These are all fine ways to honor our nations veterans, but there is another way. It is the way that we in The American Legion have chosen to serve our nation and its citizens in uniform and afterwards.

I am proud of the life membership that allows me to address as comrades the 3 million Americans united in the common cause of service to God and country. Many Legionnaires continue to serve as volunteers at our VA hospitals. Your volunteers enable the VA to extend the scope and the reach of care we provide. Volunteers also help humanize the sometimes impersonal practice of medicine. Last year, more than 4,000 Legionnaires donated almost one million hours of volunteer service to our fellow veterans.

Too many veterans wait too long for decisions on their claims. Clearly stated claims supported by the data for decision help VA help disabled veterans. The professionalism of the Legion's trained staff of service officers to represent the veterans and their families is an invaluable asset to us and to the veterans that we both serve. And the oversight of the Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission provides a healthy and necessary review of the VA's work. We are constantly working to improve our service to America's veterans and your site visits help us along the way.

I recently had the privilege of introducing the President to the young men and women

of Boy's Nation and Girl's Nation 2001. Both Boy's Nation and Girl's Nation give young people the opportunity to learn the values of democracy; values our veterans so cherished that they were willing to risk their lives to preserve that. Our veterans served to create a better world for our children and American Legion Baseball and the Drill Teams and the marching groups the Legion sponsors help to develop the good moral character in America's youth while providing them with a healthy environment in which they can have their fun, their safety and future assured by those who stand guard on the frontiers for freedom. Of course, your Legion's Americanism contest brings home the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life and while all contribute of their substance, the soldier, the soldier puts his life at risk and often yields it up in this country's cause. The highest merit, then, is due the soldier." I applaud The American Legion for your selfless commitment to freedom's defense and I want you to know that we are at the VA no less dedicated to honor your service with programs to help meet your needs for housing, health, compensation, education, pension and memorial needs.

When I came on board seven months ago, I brought with me memories of the VA that I have worked and known many years before. The VA of my earlier days is not the VA today and I have a five-part vision to make it better.

My first vision is for the VA to be the nation's recognized leader in the provision of high quality health care to a clearly defined segment of the American population. The men and women earned it by virtue of their service in our nation's uniform. In particular, I want us to lead in the areas where we have a unique role to play in America's medicine, spinal cord injury, blind rehabilitation, care for the seriously mentally ill and, of course, a very important area of geriatrics.

My second vision for this department is to be the nation's recognized leader in disability compensation and disability evaluations. This is a core mission of our department and we must do better. It is foundation upon which the VA is built and the basis for all our programs. I am particularly concerned with the fate of America's former POWs, survivors of the Bataan?? Death March, Korean War POWs, Vietnam POWs who suffered from captivity at the hands of captors who repudiated basic humanitarian responsibilities for soldiers taken prisoner. I have been quoted in the media stating that Japan should apologize for mistreating POWs during World War II. Our former POWs turn to me for help as the principle advocate of our nation's veterans and I am very, very proud to stand up for them. I also believe that we must find a way to compensate former POWs for the life long affects of prolonged captivity and treatment. I know that United States and Japan are at peace and that for the past half century, Japan has been our strongest allies, but I also believe they must acknowledge the affects of their past actions on those who were so cruelly treated, the survivors of Bataan and Corregidor.

My third vision for the VA is for VA to be the nation's recognized leader in research focused on patients whose illnesses, diseases and injuries are the product of military service. Our core mission is to care for him who has won the battle. Our research program should support that core mission.

My fourth vision for the VA is to assure America that their sons and daughters who so proudly served in time of war and peace will be forever remembered in VA cemeteries that are recognized as national shrines, secured by this service and thereby dedicated by their memories. Last year 83,000 of our fellow veterans were so honored.

Finally, my fifth vision is the VA to be the recognized leader in all of government and both in the public and the private sector in the application of sound business principles that

will allow us to be our country's most affective and efficient provider of benefits and services. The American Legion and the leadership of all our nation's veterans service organizations are partners in identifying problems and, very importantly, in identifying the solutions to the problems I will have to solve in order to make my vision concrete.

In the past few years the VA has dramatically transformed to veterans' health administration. Our veterans health administration moved from an in-patient model of care characterized by limited facilities far from a veteran's home to an out-patient model with more than 800 outpatient clinics where veterans can get care. Today, we provide better quality health care than ever before. We treat more than 500,000 additional patients with more than 25,000 fewer employees than we did just a few years ago. The cost of treating individual patients has gone down by nearly 24 percent. Indeed, we are leading the country in quality, patient safety and customer satisfaction. We are not perfect, but we are making a strong start, a strong comeback. I am very, very proud of the VA people who bring this great department to life. They are the finest public servants anywhere in the country and they have written a strong record. But we can, we must do more and we must improve our service to veterans.

We have announced a selection new out-patient clinics throughout America, established six new centers specializing in the treatment and the research and care for veterans with Parkinson's Disease. I hope that we will be the ones to find the cure for this dreadful disease. We developed a policy to pay for emergency care in non-VA facilities when veterans cannot reach a VA facility and must go to a private sector emergency room. We funded two new centers for the treatment of war-related illnesses and I am very proud that I opened up a center for spinal core injury research in Miami, Florida, hopefully to find a cure for paralysis.

We have changed our policy on the patenting, marketing and licensing of new technologies developed by our researchers so that VA gets the credit. VA gets the credit and gets to keep the revenues and the royalties from those discoveries so that we can use them to improve the care we provide. The Department of Veterans Affairs is going to get the credit our researchers do and are doing and if their work results in financial gain, we are going to use that gain on behalf of the veterans we serve. I am tired of hearing the news of some new medical breakthroughs that was created with VA research dollars and VA laboratories thought up by VA researchers and paid for with VA funds and hearing no mention of our Department anywhere at all. We must change that and give the VA the credit.

We must break down the barriers that impede the transfer of medical and personnel records from DoD to the VA so that we provide timely disability evaluations. At a time when Federal Express guarantees that the package they deliver anywhere in the world will absolutely, positively get there overnight, how can it take three months to transfer a veteran's record from St. Louis to Milwaukee or San Antonio? It is just unacceptable.

I know that you are very, very concerned with the amount of time it takes our department to process benefit claims. Let me tell you, so am I. My highest priority as Secretary is to reduce the enormous back log of 650,000 claims that are currently pending before our department. It takes too long to decide a claim, much too long. Because we understand the hazards of the modern battlefield includes more than bullets and shells, we agree to provide disability compensation with Type II diabetes who were exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam. I know this has been a longstanding issue for many of our veterans. I believe that while this will add significantly to our backlog, our caseload, it is the right thing to do.



The backlog will increase because of the need to review prior decisions as a result of recent legislation reinstating VA's duty to assist veterans in developing their claims which it never should have been stopped in the first place. However, they are not the sole reason for our backlog. It is time we took a look at our internal processing, our procedures and our organization to make the necessary improvements to reduce this backlog.

President Bush has given me a "no-holds barred" go ahead to declare war on claim processing delays. We need to address this crisis with a sense of urgency, the type of urgency we had during World War II, when we built our shipyards out of bare dirt and would launch liberty ships at the rate of one a day. The same urgency that when the *Yorktown*, badly crippled in the Battle of Coral Sea, limped back to Pearl Harbor, and they said it would take months to repair. And Nimitz said that he needed that ship on the line in 48 hours and by God, *Yorktown* was back out on sea on its way to Midway in 48 hours. If we can do it then, we asked our young men to sacrifice in World War II, we certainly can take care of them now with the same sense of urgency.

In response to the President's clear direction, I have formed a Tiger Team to take on the oldest claims filed by the oldest veterans. I never again want to report to the President or to you that a veteran has died while waiting for his claim to be processed. The Tiger Team will be headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio and staffed with fifty people and be comprised of nine other sites around the country, geographically located in order to take cases from our oldest veterans who are in regional offices and bring them to those Tiger Sites. Now the Tiger Team will work on claims filed by veterans over the age of 70 and that are now over a year old. There is 63,000 pending cases of veterans over 70, of which 8,000 have been languishing over a year. If the claim is waiting for medical information, the team has my complete authority to cut through the red tape to get the necessary records and exams immediately. Activation of the Tiger Teams will also improve service for all veterans by taking these oldest and hardest cases and freeing the rest of VBA to focus on quality decisions for all of the veterans who turn toward us for the benefits they earned. I will be holding our entire department accountable, just as I expect to be held accountable for this effort, not only those directly responsible for processing veterans claims, but also our health administration, which provides the medical evaluations, our information technology experts, who build our software and our lawyers who publish the regulations.

This past April, I commissioned a Claims Processing Task Force and I asked Admiral Dan Cooper, who recently retired as Commander of Nuclear Power Submarines Forces Atlantic Fleet, to conduct a top to bottom review of our claims system. The task force will soon provide me with recommendations to speed our decisions by changing our internal organization and our internal administrative proceedings. We will not change regulations or laws that cut back on benefits—that is off the table. I have not waited for the task force report because of the urgency of this matter since coming to office in January VA has added more than 900 new decision makers to help reduce the claims processing backlog, the highest increase since the Vietnam war. We trained 500 newly hired and promoted employees and we will train 900 more by October 1<sup>st</sup>. We developed a new computer system that will allow us to electronically access veterans medical records from medical centers and electronically transmit that information to regional offices so that we can get the information quicker.

Finally, I directed our Board of Veterans Appeals to gather additional information on cases they are reviewing instead of writing long remand decisions, sending your cases back to the regional offices where they sit for a year. I don't understand why an attorney or paralegal or law clerk can't just pick up the phone at the Board of Veterans Appeals and call

a doctor's office or a regional office if they need one small piece of information to decide your claim rather than sending it back to a regional office and have it sit there for a year. That is unacceptable; they need to do a better job. I think the great General Omar Bradley said it best, "We are dealing with veterans, not procedures; with their problems, not ours," referring to the VA. We have been so focused on the processes and procedures that we have forgotten about the most important thing, that veterans are the bottom line. Veterans not the VA are the victims of these delays. That is incognizable to me and we need to adhere to the words of General Omar Bradley.

I want to go back to a time when claim decisions are made in ninety days and done right the first time. I want decisions that veterans can read and don't have to hire a Philadelphia lawyer to read a twenty page legal brief on what the decision is. They should be to the point and tell the veteran the information they need to know in language they can understand. It is sad but true that the process takes so long that veterans die before their claims are rated. I think if we were a business, sometimes we would have gone out of business because of our record.

I believe our national cemeteries are national shrines, hallowed ground, where Americans, young and old, can go to gain a greater appreciation of the sacrifices that the generations of the men and women who served to make America great. And we will continue to fund the expansion of cemeteries in our nation, new cemeteries and expand existing cemeteries. We will work very closely with the states on the state cemetery program as well. I will do my upmost and I commit to you to ensure that our national cemeteries are worthy of the sacrifice and services of the men and women who have earned the right to be laid to rest under the American flag.

Finally, VA must use sound business principles to accomplish our mission. We must use the resources you entrusted to us wisely and effectively. Every dollar we waste means a veteran is not being served at a VA facility or another veteran will have to wait longer to get his claim decided. It is simple as this. I don't want to leave any money on the table, I don't want us to squander any of the resources entrusted to us by the American people with their hard earned tax dollars. We honor veterans when we operate effectively and effectively.

American's veterans preserve America's promise for tomorrow's citizens. In turn, America entrusted the VA in fulfilling our national obligation to those who served so well. We are called upon to meet President Lincoln's very profound Civil War challenge to America when he said, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in: to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have won the battle for his widow and his orphan; to do all that which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." Mr. Lincoln's promise to veterans of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is VA's promise to the veterans of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Tomorrow's veterans must be able to count on the high quality health care, prosthesis and benefit programs and, of course, memorial services at national cemeteries. VA's 215,000 employees want to make those visions of tomorrow a reality of today. We share with The American Legion your dedication to help every American to achieve his or her dreams. President Bush and I will work hand in hand with you to meet that goal. Together we will repay that debt that America owes America's finest.

Let me conclude again with some more words of President Lincoln's second inaugural address, probably the most beautiful in our history. He wrote, "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of

ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one another of us. The fiery trial from which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation." ... "We—even we here—hold the power, and bear the responsibly. ... We shall nobly say, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

America just celebrated its 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We are barely a teenager when compared to the dowger nations of Europe, and we are but babes when measured against the long life spans of some Middle Eastern and Asian cultures. Yet, our national will to live in and work for peace, protected by the selfless service of men and women like you, transcends the years on any calendar. It is your legacy of service and that legacy is handed down to the men and women today who are on the DMZ, in the Persian Gulf, in the Balkans, on the high seas protecting America and keeping the watch on the ramparts of freedom. You, American Legionnaires, are to be honored to be keeping the beacon of hope burning alive for all the world to see and for making America as Lincoln once wrote, "still the last best hope on earth".

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We now recognize Milwaukee for hosting the 82<sup>nd</sup> National Convention of The American Legion. To help with this order of business I would like to call upon Immediate Past National Commander, Alan Lance of Meridian, Idaho to come forward and make this presentation.

**Presentation: Plaque to the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
2000 National Convention**

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: This evening, the world champions of The American Legion baseball will be decided. There is a great team from the Department of New Jersey playing what we believe to be a greater team from Lewiston, Idaho. Both very good teams, great young men and we are anxiously awaiting the results of the World Series.

Last year we returned to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where we held the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual American Legion National Convention. It had been 1941 since we held the a convention in Wisconsin and 59 years had elapsed before we went back. Rick Barnett and the convention corporation of the Department of Wisconsin did one whale of a job. On behalf of the National Officers, the Delegates who attended that convention and the organization, we would like to present a plaque to Rick Barnett and the convention corporation.

RICK BARNETT: Thank you Commander Lance. On behalf of Mayor John Norquist, the city fathers of Milwaukee, our greater convention and visitors bureau and the citizens of Milwaukee, it is indeed an honor and a privilege to accept this plaque recognizing Milwaukee's participation in last year's 2000 American Legion Convention. American Legion, you brought great honor to the city of Milwaukee by your presence.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I call on our National Adjutant, Mr. Robert W. Spanogle, of the Department of Michigan to issue the Call for the Convention.

**Call for Convention  
Robert W. Spanogle  
National Adjutant**

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGL: The call for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention of The American Legion. By the authority of the National Executive Committee, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called

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to meet in San Antonio, Texas, August 28-30, 2001. The convention business session in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Hall C, street level.

**PURPOSE**

The Annual National Convention is the legislative body of The American Legion. The convention is called for the purpose of setting the program of The American Legion for the ensuing year amending the National Constitution and By-Laws and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it. At 12:00 noon of the final session or at the conclusion of all business of the National Convention, which ever first occurs on Thursday, August 30, 2001, officers for the ensuing year will be elected. These being the National Commander and the five National Vice Commanders in that sequence.

**REPRESENTATION**

Representation in the National Convention shall be by department and in accordance with the provisions of the National Constitution. (Section 3, Article V)

**VOTE**

"...Each department shall be entitled to five delegates and one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the meeting of said convention July 30, 2001 and whose registration fees as fixed by the National Executive Committee for its total authorized delegate strength have been paid and one alternate for each delegate." (Section 3, Article V)

In addition to the above, the members of the National Executive Committee are delegates to the National Convention with vote which shall be exercised with the respected departments except that the vote of National Commander shall be exercised only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention (Section 2, Article VII)

"Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote." (Section 4, Article V)

Delegates to the National Convention shall be accredited in writing to the National Adjutant in the number and manner prescribed by Article V of the National Constitution. The rights of departments to make accredited substitutes for absentee delegates or alternate delegates shall be recognized by the National Adjutant provided it says substitution shall be officially certified by the Department Commander and Department Adjutant at the time of the certification required by the National Constitution or at any time prior to the adjournment of the first session of the National Convention.

**ALTERNATES**

Alternates shall have the power to vote only in the absence of regular delegates. The selection of alternates to represent absent delegates is a matter for decision within the respected delegations. The vote of any registered delegate absent or not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his or her department.

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the new National Executive Committee will be held at the call of the National Commander with 24 hours after the adjournment of the National Convention as provided by the National By-Laws.

**DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS**

The department official, unless elected or alternates to The National Convention, have no privilege in the Convention except as a guest of their respective delegates.

**CONVENTION COMMITTEES**

Each department is entitled to one delegate for each of the following committees:

- Americanism
- Children & Youth
- Constitutional Amendments
- Credentials and Internal Affairs
  - Credentials and other Internal Matters, (Section I & II)
  - Membership (Section III)
- Economic
  - Employment & Veterans Preference
  - Other Economic Matters
- Finance
- Foreign Relations
- Legislation & Rules
- National Security Committee; Joint Meeting (Includes Aerospace, Defense, Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, Naval Affairs)
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
  - Claims Rating
  - Hospital and Medical Services

Mr. Commander, that concludes the call for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I now declare the 83<sup>rd</sup> National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened.

The Chair recognizes Herman Harrington of New York.

**Report: Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs  
(Section 1 of Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs)  
Herman G. Harrington, New York, Chairman**

Forty-four members and guests of the Sections on Credentials and Other Internal matters met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 26, 2001, in Room 209, Concourse Level, Henry B. Gonzalaz Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas.

Herman Harrington of New York was elected Chairman, and Larry J. Besson of Illinois was elected Secretary.

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried to accept the Delegate Strength Report as reported by the National Adjutant certifying membership 30 days prior to the National Convention. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the report be based upon the provisions of Section 3, Article V, of the National Constitution: Five delegates for each department, plus one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer thirty (30) days prior to

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the opening of the Convention (July 28, 2001); and one alternate for each Delegate. In addition, in accordance with Section 3, Article VII, members of the National Executive Committee which committee includes the National Commander, who exercises his vote only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention, and five (5) National Vice Commanders are delegates to the National Convention.

In accordance with the membership report certified to the Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs by the National Adjutant on July 28, 2001, and in accordance with Article V of the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 3,057 allocated as follows:

Alabama	31	Montana	19
Alaska	15	Nebraska	62
Arizona	47	Nevada	14
Arkansas	28	New Hampshire	30
California	142	New Jersey	82
Colorado	31	New Mexico	19
Connecticut	36	New York	193
Delaware	16	North Carolina	53
District of Columbia	9	North Dakota	30
Florida	130	Ohio	157
France	9	Oklahoma	36
Georgia	53	Oregon	32
Hawaii	9	Pennsylvania	246
Idaho	18	Philippines	8
Illinois	145	Puerto Rico	15
Indiana	134	Rhode Island	16
Iowa	77	South Carolina	33
Kansas	54	South Dakota	33
Kentucky	37	Tennessee	39
Louisiana	43	Texas	93
Maine	34	Utah	16
Maryland	84	Vermont	23
Massachusetts	72	Virginia	59
Mexico	7	Washington	43
Michigan	98	West Virginia	35
Minnesota	124	Wisconsin	81
Mississippi	25	Wyoming	14
Missouri	68		

All living past National Commanders are members of the National Executive Committee without vote and life delegates to the National Convention with vote, which is exercised in their respective Departments. (Voting strength figures attached)

Motion was adopted by majority vote that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Do I hear a second? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? The report of Credentials and Internal Affairs Section I is adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The Chair recognizes John Brieden of Texas, Chairman of the National Committee on Legislation and Rules for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules  
John A. Brieden, III, Texas, Chairman**

The Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules met at 10:00 AM on Sunday, August 26, 2001 in Room 213A, Concourse Level, in the Henry B. Gonzales Center, San Antonio, Texas. Forty-four (44) delegates assigned to this Convention Committee were in attendance, plus twenty-three (23) guests.

Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Permanent Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, John A. Brieden, III, a delegate from the Department of Texas, was elected Permanent Chairman. Claude B. Carpenter, a delegate from the Department of Arkansas, was elected Permanent Secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to the business agenda by considering the Rules of the Convention. A motion was unanimously approved by the Committee to recommend the adoption of the Standing Rules of the Convention as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for Organizing National Conventions of The American Legion.

Another unanimously approved motion allows the Permanent Chairman and Permanent Secretary to make technical corrections to the Committee Report, as necessary and appropriate.

The final unanimously approved motion authorizes the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules.

The Legislation and Rules Committee did not receive any resolutions for consideration or action. *Instead the Resolutions from other commissions with legislative intent in acted here with become the legislative mandate for the Legislative Commission.*

Under new business, the Committee heard remarks from Patrick Ryan, Chief Counsel and Staff Director for the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives. Mr. Ryan discussed recent legislative achievements and issues pending for the remainder of the First Session of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The Legislation and Rules Committee would like to offer the Convention Delegates a brief report on current congressional developments impacting issues of primary interest to The American Legion.

Both chambers of Congress have passed their versions of the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies FY 2002 appropriations bill. When Congress returns from the August recess, the Conference Committee will convene to workout the differences in funding recommendations between the two bills. The American Legion is currently lobbying Conferees for increased funding for VA medical care. Neither chamber met The American Legion's \$21.6 billion recommendation. *As you heard this morning from Congressman Ciro Rodriguez, the \$1 billion increase only addressed inflation. That gives us the same people and the same services. It is not an increase.*

Many lawmakers feel that the FY 2002 budget process may continue well after the end of FY 2001 on September 30<sup>th</sup> with final passage of the last of the 13 appropriations bills occurring in late November or possibly early December. Most budget experts believe a

series of continuing resolutions will be enacted to prevent a shutdown for the Federal government. The American Legion will closely monitor the budget process and continue efforts to influence Federal appropriations.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, Legionnaires from across the country will accompany the newly elected National Commander to Capitol Hill. The purpose of this visit will be to discuss the legislative mandates adopted by the delegates at this National Convention. The highlight of this event will be the National Commander's testimony before a joint session of the congressional Veterans Affairs Committees.

National Commander Smith, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Texas, I move the adoption of this report and the adoption of the Standing Rules of the Convention as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for Organizing National Conventions of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I have heard a second. All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? The motion carries.

The Chair recognizes Kenneth Danilson of Iowa, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Finance, for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Finance**  
**Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman**

Forty-seven (47) members met at the Henry B. Gonzalaz Convention Center, Room 311 at 9:00 a.m., August 26, 2001 in San Antonio, Texas. Paul M. Allen (Minnesota), National Finance Director, opened the meeting as staff liaison and made general announcements concerning convention activities. He then informed the committee that nominations were in order for Chairman and Secretary. Kenneth D. Danilson (Iowa) was elected Chairman and Carl E. Levi (Tennessee) was elected Secretary by unanimous vote.

The Chairman introduced the National Treasurer, George A. Buskirk, Jr. (Indiana) who updated the committee on the status of the U.S. economy and its effect on the investment policy of the national headquarters.

He stated that the economy is showing little or no growth as evidenced by a flood of negative earnings announcements commenting on how difficult business conditions are currently. Concerns have been raised about how quickly we will see signs of a recovery. Many investors now accept that 2001 earnings will be bad and have begun to anticipate a better 2002. Positive economic news should start to show up in a few months. Attention will be given to maintaining highest quality bonds, and stocks will remain invested in those companies, which have the ability to maintain earnings through cost controls with product growth in this difficult environment.

The American Legion remains confident that the U.S. economy is stable and that our economy will rebound in 2002 to the benefit of our investment portfolio.

Treasurer Buskirk then informed the committee that The American Legion has a new financial services partner, The First National Bank of Omaha. He encouraged all of our members to take advantage of their complete line of credit card and savings products which by their use, funds American Legion programs like Baseball, Boys Nation, Oratorical Contest and VA&R. For more information please call 866-LGN-VISA (866-546-8472) ext. 25329.

Treasurer Buskirk then recommended that national dues be set at \$9.00. A motion from Tony Riley (Indiana) was made that the 2001 per capita dues remain at \$9.00. Neil



Boatwright (Georgia) seconded the motion and it was adopted by unanimous vote.

The Chairman then recognized Dennis Henkemeyer (Minnesota), Chairman of The American Legion Magazine Commission and Daniel S. Wheeler (Virginia), the acting publisher/editor-in-chief of The American Legion Magazine. Mr. Wheeler reported that The American Legion Magazine is projecting a year end surplus of \$1,400,000, despite an unexpected \$150,000 annual postal increase in July plus advertising revenue is about \$800,000 less than budgeted.

In 2002, the magazine is projecting a \$1.8 million surplus. This is being effected through various economies, which do not affect the quality of the magazine and based on advertising projections that are optimistic that the economy will be turned around.

National Finance Director Paul M. Allen reported that 2000 Olive & Co. certified annual audit which was distributed to each delegate prior to the convention and published in the convention program, shows our total assets were at \$133,036,372, an 8% increase over last year. He also informed the committee that our 2000 year end surplus was \$5,477,451 and that we are anticipating over a \$1,000,000 year-end surplus in 2001. The national financial status is very sound.

Brad Jorgens (Minnesota) moved to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Finance. Anthony Minei (New York) seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

As a Delegate to this Convention I move for the approval of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I have a motion that the report be adopted. Second? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? Motion carries. The Finance report is adopted.

The Chair recognizes Past National Commander Butch Miller.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Commander Ray, it has been inspiring to watch the success you have had during the year. In particular and at a very personal note it has been very inspiring to see the way our Legion family has responded to your call for continued support of the National Emergency Fund. This afternoon I have with me Immediate Past Post Commander of Post 364, my Post back in Virginia, his lovely wife Marti Ryan, and incoming 16<sup>th</sup> District Vice Commander in our Department of Virginia, Adjutant Mr. Dale Chapman. We, sir, would like to make sure that your most successful year finishes on a high note and we would challenge all of the other Posts in the Convention to join with us in making one last contribution to the NEF.

The NEF has been kind of a good news/bad news situation. The Commander challenged us earlier in the year to raise \$500,000 in donations for the National Emergency Fund. That was the bad news. The good news is the hearts of the family of The American Legion have opened up and the last report is, if I am not mistaken that you, Commander Smith, have managed to leave this fine, wonderful, outstanding veterans' organization to over \$800,000 in donations.

Commander Smith, if you would please join us at the podium. In keeping with your call, Post 364, Woodbridge, Virginia, is proud to donate \$1.00 for every member in our roles. Commander Ryan, please present the check for \$1,320. It is our small part to be the finish of the most successful year Commander Smith.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I certainly don't want to deny anyone out there who has a contribution to make to my programs to be left out. So if you have a contribution you would like to make or anything you would like to present to me, come forward at this

time.

MR. HETHERINGTON: Our newly elected Commander, Ron Hanson of California, our new Adjutant, is out there taking pictures. It is my privilege to present to you this check for \$1,575, bringing our total to \$2,363.50.

MR. REHBEIN: It is my pleasure to have with me our Incoming Department Commander of the Department of Iowa, Mr. Dick Denbow and to present to you a check from the Department of Iowa to The American Legion National Emergency Fund in the sum of \$5,000.

MR. POWELL: I am the Department Commander from the great state of Florida and with me is the Post Commander from my home Post 141, West Palm Beach. We have a check for \$500.

MR. MICKLON: I am from the state of New Hampshire. This year and on behalf of our immediate Commander, Dennis Pierson, we have a check for \$1,000 from the state of New Hampshire. Also, that we made a promise to stop the membership slide for you. We attained our 100% membership just before coming down here to National Convention and we would like to give that to you, also.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Each year at our National Convention we are honored by the presence of representatives of other veteran organizations in other nations. Our first guest comes from the nation to our north, Canada. He is the Dominion President of the Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada and a man dedicated to veterans.

**Address: R.R. 'Bob' Cassels  
Dominion President, ANAVIC**

It is a pleasure to be with you today to bring greetings from Canada's oldest veterans's organization, the Army, Navy, Air Force veterans in Canada, formed in 1840. First, I would like to congratulate you on your opening this morning about membership. We in Canada are having the same problems. You can be sure Mr. Smith that I will take some of your ideas back with me and I would like to take you with me to help generate the enthusiasm that you have enthused here in the members of The American Legion to pick up 8,000 members in one year. That is quite a feat. You and the members deserve congratulations. We in Canada are working very hard with other veterans organizations for the betterment of our veterans.

This past year has seen us since 1988 until 2001, trying to get a settlement for the Merchant Navy veterans of Canada with our government. Back in 1988 we were able to secure by 1990-1991 benefits for these veterans which would give them V.I.P Program which is our keeping our veterans in their home where they are accustomed to, and the government would subsidize them for home care, be it painting, snow removal, or looking after their grass. They would pay for things like that plus benefits and transporting them back and forth to visits with their doctors. We got that in 1991 and from that time on we have been fighting with our government to give them a monetary settlement that the rest of the people got when they left the Armed Forces at the end of the war. They were given a disembarkment payment settlement which the Merchant Navy personnel did not receive. I am pleased to say that a year ago we had convinced our government to invest \$50 million in this settlement. We were told at the time it would be approximately 3,700 recipients. Little did we know, we received 14,600 applications. In narrowing them down to those who qualified with records that the government has and the individual have it came down to 7,200 people. So needless to say our original commitment to the Merchant Navy people of getting them \$5,000 for the person who had served up to three months, six months to

eighteen months was \$10,000 and those over eighteen months and on was \$20,000. And the cash settlement if they were prisoner of war, 10% more. So you can see that \$50,00 would not quite cover it. We approached the government in early April of this year and we went back and said your first cash payment is not going to be enough. We were quite successful as a veterans' organization in convincing our government to come through with 1.4 and ½ million dollars to settle that payment with the Merchant personnel which they were entitled to.

The second one we convinced our government is to start a Canadian veterans advisory council. The advisory council is made up from people from the Royal Canadian Legion, National Council of Veterans Associations and people now serving in the Armed Forces and those who have served. The purpose of this is to get our Canadian government to look after the individuals who serve in our Canadian Forces, be it when they are released, be it while they are still serving. We had a policy in Canada that if an individual was injured while serving he could not collect any compensation payment while serving and when, he got out he got nothing. We have been successful to pay this individual for the compensation they would qualify if they were on civilian street, which means they would get a compensation payment plus their regular pay. Upon disembarkment they would then be qualified for this pension that they had received, plus we now can get them under veterans' care because there is a record of an injury that has happened to this individual while serving their country. This gives them access to veterans benefits be it via the VIP Program, be it medication, be it doctor's care or infirmity. We also have gone as far in this last while to convince the government that they should not just treat the individual, they should treat the family of the individual, possibly going farther if they are not married, possibly the mother and father of that individual.

We were also successful in having the Canadian government change the classification of the veteran in Canada. The veteran in Canada was only one that served only in wartime. Now it is somebody that puts on the uniform, serves their country and takes the oath of allegiance to Canada. They are fully covered with all of the veterans benefits. This is something we have been working very hard on over the past few years. We are working very hard with the Royal Canadian Legion and the National Council of Veterans Associations to convince our government that we must look after those who serve our country today as well as in the past.

I would like to thank you for the time listening to me today and for the hospitality that has been shown to my wife, Lisa, and I. I would ask Commander Smith if he would come forward. I would like to present to him one of the last medals that will be struck by the Army, Navy and Air Force veterans in Canada.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: It is my honor to present to you, the newly elected National Commander of the third member of The American Legion family, the Sons of The American Legion. He is a member of Sharon Squadron 106 in Sharon, Massachusetts. His tireless work has made huge membership progress at home and he plans to take that progress cross the land in the months ahead, Cliff Smith of Massachusetts.

**Address: Cliff Smith, Massachusetts, National Commander  
The Sons of The American Legion**

I am honored to stand before you as a newly elected National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. I recognize the great delegation here from the Department of

Massachusetts led by our Department Commander Larry Connors and our great Past National Commander, Jake Comer. I congratulate you, Commander Smith, on your commitment on strengthening the bond between The American Legion. I am sure, during the coming year, that this bond will continue to ensure the strength and continued growth of The American Legion family.

The dramatic changes in our society over the years pose some challenge to the traditional institutions of family, school, church, and governments. The decisions we make today will have a direct impact on what kind of society our children and our children's children and we will live. Our organization must be a voice in this changing society. Preparing for the future of The American Legion family must be done now. This why my theme this year will be "Focus on the Future." Recruitment, retention and attraction of members will not happen some time in the future unless we plan for them now. The challenge of The American Legion family members is to improve our performance so that our organization is better understood. Whatever is in the past can never be changed, only used for teaching. It is important for our membership to realize that we must focus on the future if we are to have continued growth.

One of our first challenges to our organization is the education of our membership. I feel one of the problems our organization is the lack of knowledge of it within our own membership. We tend not to teach our membership what it is all about or require our members to learn. Far too members cannot explain our organization to those outside the organization. We must expand our informational workshops, set up training seminars for future officers who will be our future leaders. The future of our American Legion family lies in the education of our membership. Only by understanding can our organization approve, and without improvement we will never advance.

The willingness to accept change is another challenge we face today. We need to accept or best give the new members a chance. We need to get away from doing the same old things the same old ways. Sometimes trying a new idea is not always successful for the first time; we try it but failure to succeed is not final, but a lesson to be learned for the next challenge. We must learn to listen to our new members and accept the challenging ideas of our membership and to be open to the paths of development. We must hope the ideas of today will be an inspiration to the ideals of tomorrow.

This week we are here electing new leaders of our American Legion family. However, leaders are not those that are elected, but those that make a change in the hearts of minds of those they come in contact with. This is the wonderful characteristic of membership of our great American Legion family. With all the programs, we promote every member as a leader. Our membership gives us all a unique quality in making a change throughout our communities, our state and our nation, honor, pride, discipline, devotion to country and friends. These are just a few of the characteristics that embody the members of the Sons of The American Legion. However, these are not just traits that have been accidently acquired. These worthy qualities were developed by our close association with our fathers and our grandfathers who had unselfishly gave of themselves to defend this great country during the time of wars that our country had to endure. By belonging to the Sons of The American Legion we are able to associate ourselves with other people whose ancestors made the same sacrifices to our ancestors did. The programs and activities that the Sons of The American Legion are involved, make us remember that freedom is not just a word in the dictionary, but a daily privilege we enjoy, thanks to the many veterans that realized that something worth fighting for and even dying for.

A veteran is a young man or woman who has answered the country's call to guarantee

that our freedom and rights will not only continue for this generation, but also for future generations. The veterans of yesterday and of today warn you that our way of life does not come cheap. Hundreds of thousands of young men and women have given their lives and millions have suffered permanent injuries to protect freedom. When your nation calls, answer it because the youth of today and tomorrow has our future in their hands.

In closing, the focus of the Sons of The American Legion is patriotism and aid to the veteran. We realize that America was born and exists today because of the dreams and the efforts of veterans of all wars. To this we owe a debt of gratitude. To those who are serving today, we are also grateful, for you will be the veterans of tomorrow because you are the soldiers of today. Let us always remember the standards we have today, we owe to those who served before us and to those who served now. It is our duty to instill our appreciation on to the future generations and to ensure to those who have served in the defense of our freedoms will not be forgotten. As we enter the new millennium, it is important for our organization and our membership to realize that we must focus on the future.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: During my travels as your National Commander, it was a pleasure to also meet with men in Taiwan who share our passion to care for those who have served in uniform. Welcome the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission from the Republic of China, General Yang Te-chih.

**Address: General Yang, Te-chih  
Chairman of Veterans Affairs Commission  
Republic of China**

The American Legion and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China have been long time allies over the past decade; we had comrades fighting for freedom, democracy and justice. We did that and our children are keeping on the sacred mission. We hope our children will not need to encounter the undesired work anymore. It is therefore our endless duty to bring peace to the world in our lifetime by supporting our government with all our might, while our children are fighting the militants, the terrorists, and the aggressors on the forefronts.

Dear friends, The American Legion veterans have once given their best part of life defending their country and are still doing their share looking after their pals and seeking ways to make veterans live more happily ever after.

In our country, the Republic of China, our veterans have also given the prime time of their life defending our country. They are getting old, just like everyone will and they certainly deserve the respect and services from those they had served. Learning very much from you, we, the Veterans Affairs Commission, also provide for them free medical care, home care, educational assistance and employment assistance.

My dear friends, I want to also express sincere thanks for your continuous supports for our country by passing resolutions every year, urging your government to maintain ally relationship with our country which is still standing tall in defending human rights from communist threats on the west brim of the Pacific Ocean. The Republic of China has always been proud to be a long time ally of America, and all my fellow Chinese veterans will love to join my countrymen in cooperating with our American comrades in the cause of striving for world peace and freedom for all mankind.

I once again thank you for your general assistance in the past, and, on behalf of all Chinese veterans, I wish you a great successful Annual Convention in the great city of San

Antonio in Texas.

INTERPRETER: Now, on behalf of the President of the Republic of China, Chairman General Yang would like to present a Medal of Cloud and Banner to the National Commander, Mr. Smith. And here is the certificate. It reads: "Certificate accompanying the award of the Medal of Cloud and Banner, numbered 2001, on the date of August 28 in the year of 2001. Mr. Ray Smith, National Commander of The American Legion has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of United States of America and Republic of China and to the support of the Republic of China's re-entry to the United Nations."

"In appreciation of his meritorious assistance, National Commander Smith is presented the Medal of Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the government of the Republic of China in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Declaration Regulations." Signed by Chen Shui-Bian, the President; Chang Chi-shon, the Premier, Mun Shi-weng, the Minister of National Defense.

And another presentation, very glittering, presented to Mr. Ray Smith, National Commander of The American Legion. "In appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between The American Legion and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. Presented by General Yang, Te-chih, the Chairman Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China on the date of August 28, 2001."

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Joe Craig, the NEC from Alaska and Jimmy Foster, the Alternate, will join us. General Yang, it is a pleasure for me to present to you The American Legion Amnesty Award. "In grateful recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs, and for contributions made in development of international goodwill and comradeship between The American Legion and our wartime allies of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. Awarded by the National Commander of The American Legion, with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee, to General Yan, Te-Chih, given the 6<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2001." Signed by Ray G. Smith, National Commander, Robert W. Spanogle, National Adjutant.

General Yang, I also have a medal I would like to give to you.

GENERAL YANG, TE-CHIH: Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: General Yang, thank you for making my visit to Taiwan so very special. We had a wonderful visit and we thank you for being such a great host.

**Report: National Commander's Report to the Convention**  
**Ray G. Smith, North Carolina**  
**National Commander**

Fifty years ago, just a few miles away from here, I began an important chapter of my life. At Lackland Air Force Base I had my first taste of military service. Basic Training marked my first steps to become a Legionnaire. Today, I realize I have come full circle. Granted things look different five decades ago and I imagine I have changed somewhat to. One thing that seems to have remained the constant is the Texas heat.

What a great trip this year has been. I recall hearing several Past National Commanders reflect back on what they felt to wear this red cap. Their words at the time confused me; now I understand. William Butler Yates said it best, "Think where man's glory begins and ends

and say my glory was, I had such friends". Today our great organization continues to live by this slogan, "We shall not fail those with whom we served".

My fellow Legionnaires it has been a great year. We've worked hard and most importantly we had fun. A year ago I pledged as National Commander to stop the membership slide. I felt tackling this challenge would be my main focus during my year in office. As you know membership is the life blood of any organization. Five years ago we saw our membership begin to decline. We were losing Posts and it appeared as if new Legionnaires were scarce. It was apparent something needed to be done. From local Post to the National Headquarters we took a strong look at ourselves and asked some tough questions.

Questions like; how well are we reaching out to young veterans and their families? Do these young veterans and others realize how hard Legionnaires work on their behalf? Are we asking eligible veterans to join? With your help we have begun to find the answers to these questions and others. Legionnaires from across the country responded to our membership challenges. You helped achieve great results.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to report that our membership slide has stopped. Not only that, it has been reversed. Nineteen Departments have exceeded their 100% goal. That is the highest number of Departments in five years. Thanks to you, we are growing again. This didn't happen because we changed our values. It happened because you asked your veterans to join our ranks. We now have a stronger foundation to continue this membership growth going into the year 2002 membership year and beyond. We must persist in our efforts to visit the Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard facilities. The "Reconnect" program is great because it is the right thing to do. We must keep the family support network alive and functional; taking care of families of Guard and Reserve troops deployed in our defense is always the right thing to do. A growing membership ensures our core values of comradeship, community involvement, freedom and democracy still ring true in the hearts of Americans.

During a recent "Reconnect" visit a young airman asked how it is that our organization of over more than eight decades has managed to stay involved in helping out the veterans, their families and our country. At first, I didn't know what to say. At first I was ready to explain how The American Legion is managed and structured. I was going to tell him how we worked hard to support Americanism, Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and more; how we maintain a positive attitude. Then I noticed a patch on the shoulder of his uniform, glimpsing the blue field with fifty stars and the thirteen red and white stripes, and the answer jumped out at me. It is the American flag. That is how our organization has strived and grown. That is how we are able to take on bigger and broader challenges. Think about it. We served under that flag. Our comrades went to their grave with Old Glory draped on their caskets.

The American Legion is a patriotic organization. Everything we do is for the ultimate good of the nation and its citizens. The American flag represents this nation. The American flag motivates you and me. On July 17, 2001 House Joint Resolution 36, The Proposed Flag Protection Constitutional Amendment, passed the House of Representatives. It marked the fourth time that The American Legion and its 141 partners in the Citizens Flag Alliance reached this objective with success. Each of you in this hall today made this possible. Now as before, in the wake of the House victory, we must prepare to do battle with a handful of U.S. Senators who are slow to yield to the will of the American people. Whatever it takes we shall stay the course. As I said to many of you in my travels, a flag protection amendment has never been "if" for us, only "when." We have a commitment to protect our

flag and we also have a commitment to take care of all veterans, those who once served under that flag and those who continue to serve today.

Some of the most memorable experiences I have had over this past year have occurred while visiting our troops all over the world. I visited troops in Korea, Bosnia, Europe and at bases here at home. Our troops, without exception, are the finest in the world. I am happy to report that those soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guard men are very aware and very appreciative of what The American Legion is doing for them. They know that we have their best interests in mind and morale is high. Legionnaires, this year you showed our Active Duty and Reserve troops that The American Legion is there for them.

When the United States Army leadership tried to rob the elite U.S. Army Rangers of their distinctive beret, you quickly mobilized in defense of their head gear and the right to wear it. Today, because of your vocal protest and reasonable arguments, the U.S. Army Rangers can keep their unique look. The beret may be a different color, but those Rangers will still stand out in a crowd. When the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps were stopped from conducting their vital training operations on Vieques, you lobbied in their defense. Today, with your help our military is once again using the Vieques training ground.

During the presidential campaigns The American Legion played a tremendous role in raising national security awareness. We made national security a serious issue of debate. During the election itself, it was the military vote that made the difference. President Bush owes his election to our military men and women overseas. Without the Florida overseas vote, he would not have won the state's 25 electoral votes and would have been denied the Presidency. America's military members past and present demonstrated their trust in his words by their votes. It is imperative he reinforces his words with deeds. Our veterans deserve it, fairness demands it, and our national defense requires it.

The American Legion will always be faithful to our military and our veterans, but our federal government has broken plenty of promises to them. Only one group of federal retirees must give up a portion of their retired pay in order to receive disability compensation, those who spent a career in the nation's Armed Forces. Instead of giving those veterans their full disability check, the government currently counts their disability income as a non-taxable part of their retirement. As a result, disabled veterans are getting far less than the government owes them. In The American Legion we know that is wrong. This year we have strongly supported concurrent receipt legislation that will allow military retirees with at least twenty years of service and a service-connected disability to receive both military retired pay and VA disability compensation without deduction of either. The recent power shift in the Senate provides the perfect opportunity to put this issue on the front burner. Thanks to Senate Majority Whip Harry Reid of Nevada, S-170, the Retired Pay Restoration Act would once and for all correct this long standing miscarriage. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle supports this concurrent receipt legislation. With your help we will encourage Senator Daschle to move this legislation forward for an expeditious vote.

When a veteran suffers from a result of their service, their families suffer as well. This is especially true of the Agent Orange. As you know Agent Orange is a herbicide containing cancer causing dioxin that was sprayed by U.S. troops in Vietnam. In a recent study performed by an Australian research team, children of veterans exposed to Agent Orange during the war are likely to have an acute form of leukemia. Based on the study these victims are eligible for federal compensation, but the Department of Veterans Affairs is dragging their feet on this issue because of possible faulty research data. Now they are calling for more research to determine if there is a link between Agent Orange exposure and leukemia in veterans children. Our Legion will do everything possible to ensure that just



compensation is neither denied or delayed if scientific evidence is available.

The American Legion has been in the forefront on the issue of Agent Orange exposure and its health effects on veterans who were exposed to it since the late 1970s when it first became an issue. When some government officials said an Agent Orange study couldn't be done, we were involved with doctors Jeanne and Steven Stellman conducting a broad base research project\*, the Columbia University and American Legion Vietnam veterans study. The Stellmans are now involved in government funded research which includes a follow up on the Columbia University American Legion study. We are anxiously awaiting the findings which we expect to be released later this year. The American Legion will continue to pursue the health effects of Agent Orange exposure until all of the questions are answered.

The American Legion is working closely with the Department of Veteran Affairs on other issues as well. This year, we strongly supported a resolution passed by the House Budget Committee in March that would be good for veterans. The measure would increase the Department of Veterans Affairs budget by \$5.6 billion in fiscal year 2002. The resolution authorizes a \$1.7 billion increase in discretionary spending which includes health care and the VA claims process.

House Resolution 811, The Veterans Hospital Emergency Repair Act will authorize \$250 million in fiscal year 2002 and \$300 million in fiscal year in 2003 for VA construction and repair projects. This resolution passed because more than 1,000 our fellow Legionnaires from across the country stormed Capitol Hill and personally lobbied their members of Congress for a strong veterans affairs budget. This level of funding will go a long way toward improving the death, disability, health care and educational benefits of veterans. It will provide the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Tony Principi, the funds he needs to expedite the VA claims process so that someday it will no longer take months or years for disability claims to be adjudicated. The measure further will satisfy The American Legion's budget recommendation for a minimum \$1.4 billion increase in VA health care spending.

You didn't stop there. You called on Congress to make further improvements to this measure by adding a provision of The American Legion's G.I. Bill of Health. This would allow veterans to use their Medicare coverage to receive treatment in the VA. Many more veterans would use the system if they could use their Medicare benefits for any type of care they require just as they can in the private sector. Our proposal would give more veterans the access to quality health care they earned and allow VA to become a direct TRICARE contractor to enhance health care to military retirees.

This year you helped bring about the most significant piece of legislation since we engineered the G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944. The Veterans Claims Assistant Act of 2000 is landmark legislation that requires the Veterans Administration to provide appropriate explanations concerning entitlement to VA benefits. Claims can no longer be denied by fake characterizations like not being well-grounded. This legislation finally requires the VA to fully explain decisions that they make which greatly affects the lives of veterans. There will be no more "sweeping under the rug." If a claim is denied, the VA must include an explanation of what evidence could be presented to get the claim granted. There is a whole generation of veterans and their families who have yet to be recognized by their nation for their efforts to save the world from tyranny. They are the greatest generation, the millions of American veterans who served during World War II and the men and women who helped with the war effort back home. Today, they are dying at a rate of more than 1,000 every

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\* *Environmental Research: a journal of environmental medicine and the environmental sciences*, Volume 47, number 2 (December 1988).

single day. It is time to build to build a national memorial in their honor.

Finally, due in no small part to your great effort, the battle has been won and this country can say a long overdue thank you to the World War II generation. A national memorial will be built in a prominent spot on the Mall in Washington, D.C. You helped raise over \$4 million for this memorial. Then, when a few malcontents threatened to stop the monument and location from being approved, you stood up and backed the bill that allowed the project to go forward. After twenty-two public hearings over the last six years, the American people can be confident that the World War II Memorial will be an appropriate reminder of the triumph of democracy over tyranny. You made it happen.

Support for our veterans and their families is a major part of what The American Legion is all about. This year we proved that time and time again. For instance, it has been a banner year for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. During the past twelve months, more than \$825,000 has been contributed to this very worthy foundation. This represents an increase of \$350,000 over the previous year. All the money raised is going to be put to good use, funding grants to youth serving organizations to benefit our nation's children.

As you know the National Emergency Fund is near and dear to my heart because I have seen in my home state of North Carolina how destruction Mother Nature can be. The NEF was there when our members and families needed immediate assistance. With the help of each and everyone of you, the National Emergency Fund will continue to meet the most immediate needs of our Legion family after a natural disaster. Our fund today has more than \$700,000 available due to your hard work and willingness to help our fellow veterans. We're not where I would like to be, but we are in good shape if the need to lend assistance arises. So far this year, we have provided grants to thirty-seven Legionnaires and three Posts for more than \$60,000. I personally want to thank those Departments who actively supported my NEF challenge program this year. We raised more than \$300,000. I enjoyed taking the six winning Department Commanders to dinner last Saturday night. From the size of the bill, I'd say they enjoyed it, too. That is what it is all about. Having fun while serving our fellow veterans and communities in need.

Finally, I want you to know how proud I am of each of you for standing up in your communities this year for one of America's most cherished traditions, the Boy Scouts. They have come under brutal assault in the arena of political correctness simply because they exercised their right to set their own membership and leadership standards. Our American Legion believes enough is enough. We led the way in calling for all Americans to speak up for the Scouts. We will continue to urge all citizens who believe what is right and decent to demand that their city and county councils, commissioners, school boards and other local officials resist any and all political attacks on this great American institution. We will continue to fight for Scouts because it is the right thing to do.

When I started basic training here, I never could have imagined the path my life would take and that I would find myself back in San Antonio fifty years later. I went from Airman Smith to National Commander Smith—it only took my five decades. These hotels here are much nicer than the tents I stayed in as a military trainee. Following my rigorous training in the hot, dusty San Antonio heat, I was off to Korea; fighting off my generation's version of tyranny and terrorism. The training I received in this town prepared me for that assignment. Nearly fifty years of service to God and country prepared me for these past twelve months.

Growing up in North Carolina, I thought The American Legion was a community hall where my neighbors got together for special occasions. I have to thank World War I veteran,

Theodore Quigley, for showing me otherwise. The day after I got home from my Air Force service, Mr. Quigley invited me to join this organization. He made it clear that The American Legion is much more than a community hall. It is a lifelong celebration of a memory that joins us in a common bond. That bond defines who we are. From my year as your Commander I can tell you we are strongest, most respected veterans organization. We care about others. That makes all the difference in the world. Thank you for all the support you have given me this year and for giving me your confidence and allowing me to serve as your National Commander.

During the past twelve past months it has been an honor to serve side by side with our next guest. Kristine S. West has been an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary for twenty years. She has filled many key state and national offices for America's largest patriotic women's organization. Helping to stress the family nature of the Legion experience, Kris worked this year to increase membership and keep alive the spirit of volunteer service. Through her special project, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, plenty of enthusiasm was generated, along with \$50,000 to further the program in more than half of the nation's VA medical centers. Welcome the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary from Manchester, New Hampshire, Kristine West.

**Address: Kristine S. West, New Hampshire, National President  
The American Legion Auxiliary**

All year long, as I traveled through forty-nine of the fifty states and to foreign lands, it was my desire to have everyday be veterans' day. I have visited approximately sixty-five VA hospitals, state veterans homes and vet centers, all to visit veterans and to simply to say "thank you." I made each veteran I met feel extra special; letting him or her know that I use to fly from New Hampshire just to see them and just to visit with them. I promoted volunteers and service all year and I must commend The American Legion for this strong support and their volunteer service to our veterans. I was quite surprised when I attended the National VAVS in Arizona in April knowing that The American Legion had more volunteers and more volunteer hours than the American Legion Auxiliary. So my thanks to you for caring for the fellow veterans.

I have promoted the Creative Arts Program this year. It was my special project and last year in Milwaukee, I had pledged \$50,000 to be a co-sponsor along with the Help Hospitalized Veterans Organization. Little did I know that dream would become a reality. Today, with The American Legion support and the Sons of The American Legion, we have contributed \$129,000 in one given year. That is just a wonderful feat since we pledged this last September 7<sup>th</sup> and it hasn't even been a year. I know that The American Legion family works so closely together in so many of our programs and I know that the National Commander is so proud with what The American Legion family did this year for the Child Welfare Foundation. Commander Smith, I know you weren't in the hall this morning with the Auxiliary, but I commended you in my year-end report for your great effort you did for the children this year. Everywhere I traveled, the Vice Commanders were working hard on your behalf for the Child Welfare Foundation as well as the National Emergency Fund.

Together we can accomplish great things. I must sincerely thank all the Department Commanders, the National Executive Committeemen and many others who made me feel so special when I visited your Departments. You truly are a wonderful American Legion family and I am honored to be the National President and serve as an Auxiliary to the

greatest veterans organization in this world.

I have truly enjoyed this year, but a lot goes to the National Commander, Ray G. Smith. He has welcomed me and been there at my side at many visits and made me feel so special, with him and his aide, Frank Stansel. I hate to see this year come to an end. I feel we have many more veterans that I could visit and many, many more veterans just to say thank you to. To the veterans in this room, I cannot thank you enough for what you did at such a young age in your life. I will be ever indebted to each and everyone of you and I wish for you that everyday would be Veterans Day.

Thank you for your love and support this year and I certainly appreciate the direction, the leadership and the guidance that National Commander, Ray G. Smith, has offered to this great American Legion family. I also want to thank the National Adjutant, Robert W. Spanogle for all his wonderful support he had given me during this year. It has been an honor to meet with him on many occasions this year. I wish you a most successful convention as our days are getting shorter being in this office, but National Commander has done this organization proud. I am very proud to be serving as National President to such a great leader as Ray G. Smith.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Now I call on the National Adjutant for administrative announcements.

**Announcement: Robert W. Spanogle  
National Adjutant**

Tomorrow's Convention session will be a very exciting one. National Commander, Ray G. Smith will call the Convention to order after the Salute to Colors and the Invocation by our National Chaplain. The Commander will award the Distinguished Service Award to General Henry H. Shelton, who is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This is the highest award that The American Legion can present. Following that presentation, we will have an address by the Honorable Rick Perry, the Governor of the state of Texas. Following that we will have a special presentation by the Children's Miracle Network, Merlin Olson, their spokesperson and Mike Shannon, their co-founder and CEO and we will have some Miracle children here from the San Antonio Children's Hospital. Following that, we will have some very special guests: the President of the United States, the Honorable George W. Bush and the First Lady Laura Bush.

President West will make a special presentation to the First Lady and that will be followed by the address by the President of the United States. The Auxiliary will join us in this hall as will some distinguished guests from Texas, some active duty servicemen and some grade school students. With that comes the need in our time of life for security. The bus shuttles will start operating at 6:30 a.m. from the various hotels. This hall will open at 7:00 a.m. and it will be locked down for security purposes at 9:00 a.m. No one will be allowed after 9:00 because of security requirements of the President of the United States and everyone will have to go through one of ten magnetometers at the entrance. So I would ask you to leave cell phones, beepers, little knives and all of those wonderful things that we all carry in our pockets at home because they will make those magnetometers go off. On the conclusion of this session of the National Convention, the Western Caucus will be meeting in this hall immediately after we recess.

The first general session of the Past National Vice Commanders Club, their initial gathering, has been scheduled following the conclusion of this session of the convention

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*Proceedings of Tuesday, August 28, 2001*

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from 3:00-5:00 in Room 204B of the Henry B. Gonzalaz Convention Center.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Delegates, join me in a salute to the flag of the United States of America. The time is 3:07 p.m. The Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

...At 3:07 p.m. the Convention recessed to convene the following day, Wednesday, August 29, 2001, at 9:00 a.m.

**PROCEEDINGS  
SECOND DAY**

**Wednesday, August 29, 2001**

...At 8:30 a.m., the Delegates listened to the Prelude.

...At 9:00 a.m. the Delegates assembled for the second day of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The Convention will come to order. Please face the flag of our country. Join with me in saluting the flag of the United States of America. One. Two!

For the Invocation, I will call upon our National Chaplain, Reverend Calvin C. Turpin of Post 69 in California.

**Invocation**

**Dr. Calvin C. Turpin, California, National Chaplain**

It is my sad duty to tell you that our comrade, Roy Bunting, Division East Commander for the Department of Oklahoma had a massive heart attack yesterday and was transferred to Post Everlasting and that he and his family will be in our prayers.

Our Heavenly Father, on this second day of our Convention, we ask You to bless and to protect our great nation. Guide and direct our minds so that we may know our duties to Thee, to our country, to The American Legion, and to one another. Grant that our action bring honor to those to either served or have served in the military to protect this great and good land. Bless and lovingly keep all whom might yet prisoners of war or missing in action. Let them know of Thy love and ours. God bless President and Mrs. Bush and God bless America. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Please remain uncovered and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

...The Delegates stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The Convention is now in session.

**Presentation The American Legion Distinguished Service Award  
General Henry H. Shelton**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor The American Legion can bestow on an individual. To be considered for the Distinguished Service Award one must demonstrate outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion. Our recipient this year is well qualified and is a native Tar Heel. He was commissioned in the United States Army in 1963 through the ROTC program. He has served in key commands and for the past four years he has been Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This distinguished officer and American has helped to promote such efforts as the "Reconnect" Program and other initiatives which reminds all citizens that service in uniform is a high calling. I present the Distinguished Service Award to General Henry Shelton.

GEN. HENRY H. SHELTON: What a privilege it is for me to be to be here with you today. Let me congratulate you also on completing a magnificent tenure as National

Commander. Thank you and all the members of The American Legion for this very Distinguished Service Award. What a great honor it is to receive this award and what a privilege it is to receive it when one continues the outstanding Americans which have been previously recognized for this prestigious award and from such a great group of Americans. I am truly humbled and I accept it on behalf of all the great men and women of our Armed Forces who very proudly serve our nation on land, at sea and in the air.

On a sadder note, just a week ago, one of the strongest supporters and best friend of the military and our veterans on Capitol Hill was laid to rest in his native state of South Carolina. The death of Congressman, Floyd Spence, a proud member of The American Legion and a great American who truly embodied the ideal of service to his country, is a great loss to our military, to our veterans, to our Congress and a great loss to America. He will be sorely missed.

It is a wonderful honor for me to be here in San Antonio today in the company of so many proud and great veterans. I can't imagine a location that is more appropriate of gathering of warriors than right here in the Alamo city. People around the globe remember the Alamo as a heroic struggle over overwhelming odds, a place where brave men made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. So it is with you, the members of The American Legion, American heroes one and all, citizen soldiers who answered our nation's call and defended the freedoms that we all hold so dear. Legionnaires, I salute you for your service to America in the wars of the last century. I salute you for the important work that the Legion continues to do across our great land.

In my view, The American Legion today, its members, are still on the front lines, still serving the country that you love, our great nation, America. The only difference is you no longer have to eat C-rations, K-rations or MREs. This morning, as we stand here in this beautiful city, young soldiers are serving America; helping to maintain stability in the Balkans, young sailors are serving on the flight deck of the *USS Enterprise* in the Persian Gulf. We have Marines embarked with the amphibious group in the Mediterranean and airmen are preparing F-15s that will soar today in the support of the "no fly" zone operations in the skies over Iraq. Meanwhile, we have 37,000 great soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who are serving along the Demilitarized Zone in Korea. Indeed, we have thousands upon thousands of young Americans who stand watch over the globe protecting America's interests and serving our nation proudly.

They are part of a great team, America's First Team. I am proud to tell you that they remain the best trained, the best equipped and the most capable fighting force in the world today. But, before we can congratulate ourselves too much, let me also say we have a few challenges that must be addressed if we are to remain the best in the years ahead. The two challenges I would like to discuss with you this morning very briefly can be summed up in two words: compliancy and change. Let me explain.

Today, we are in a world of relative peace as we all know and appreciate. The Soviet Union is no more and we remain entrenched as the world's only super power. More and more nations are embarking on and embracing democracy as well as the rule of law. The global economy continues to expand and consequently very few Americans today perceive any real threats to our national security. In short, we are at peace and our tendency as Americans is, and has always been, in times like these to become complacent. One symptom of this is the level of investment that we, as a nation, are putting into our national defense. Today we are spending less than 3% of our gross domestic product on the Armed Forces. That is the lowest level since before Pearl Harbor. Three cents on the dollar: that is what we spend on our national security effort. By some accounts, America spends more on gambling

than we spend on national security. I might also add by the same accounts, we spend more on cosmetics than we do on national security, but I am not going there.

Even if the plus ups in defense that have been proposed for the next fiscal year, those plus ups have been viewed by some as not necessary. I think it is very important that we collectively begin to change that mind set because, as everyone in this room knows, we must remain vigilant, we must remain combat ready. It is still a very dangerous and very uncertain and certainly an unpredictable world that we live in today. This means we must have the resources to maintain the capability a global leader needs in order to protect our national interests as well as to contribute to the great prosperity that we as Americans enjoy. We all remember the shock of Pearl Harbor, the sudden crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and the Yellow River and Saddam Hussein's brutal surprise attack and invasion of Kuwait.

The truth is that we have never predicted the use of force in any America's major wars. We were surprised each time. If we allow ourselves to become complacent, we open up ourselves to the serious consequences of increased vulnerability to strategic surprise like the examples I cited. There is increased vulnerability involving threats from terrorists attacks to the proliferation of missiles with nuclear or biological chemical and also to cyber warfare. We also face increased vulnerability to sudden changes in both the character and technologies of war. The net result is, that we incur increased risk. Increased risk to our troops as well as increased risk to our country. As we know, this has happened before. For those of you who fought in Korea, fifty years ago, you know who paid the price for a nation that was unprepared for the war in the Pacific.

I ask at this time that all of our great Korean War veterans to please stand and be recognized.

It was our troops who paid the price, many of the great individuals whom you just saw standing along with their contemporaries. So we ask ourselves; how did we get into that situation? There are three points that come quickly to mind.

First of all, we significantly cut the size of our Armed Forces after World War II as we have done after every major conflict in history. We dramatically scale back, or we eliminated, the combat training for many of our units as resources were reduced. We continue to rely on worn out and outdated equipment for our fighting forces and, as a consequence, brave and talented men standing peacetime occupation duties in Japan and elsewhere in the Pacific, many of whom stood today and we recognized, suddenly found themselves thrown in a bitter fight in Korea for which they were ill-prepared and ill-equipped. We have grown complacent and as such we were increasingly vulnerable to a quick attack. This proved to be a costly mistake which was paid for in currency worth far more than gold or silver. It was paid for with American blood. We must not make that mistake again.

This leads me to the second challenge that we face today and that is the challenge to change or transform the military so that we will be prepared for future threats. As many of you are aware, we are in a middle of a congressionally mandated quadrennial defense review. That task asks us to examine our defense strategy, our core structure and yes, our budget. We are not starting at square one.

Three years ago your Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CINCs, our Commanders in Chief that we have throughout the world, saw the need to change the way we do business in order to deal with future threats. Several key changes were recommended to the President and signed into law at the 1999 Unified Command Plan. To deal with the threat, for example, of cyber warfare and the potential threat of our ever increasing reliance of our information technology, we formed a Joint Task Force for Computer Network Operations under the



auspicious of the United States Space Command located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, a move that has paid untold dividends as various countries and hackers have attempted to penetrate our most sensitive defense department nets. Additionally, it also gives a new tool in the kitbag that we can use offensively if the nation decided to do that.

We also recognize the potential catastrophic results that would occur if America were attacked by a terrorists organization with chemical, biological or even a small nuclear device. Consequently, we stood up a joint test force for consequence management under our Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia, a command that is prepared to deal with the consequences of a large scale attack of this nature in support of a lead federal agency such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Our goal there is to have forces that are organized, that are trained and are equipped to assist our citizens when necessary when the first responders or the local authorities find themselves overwhelmed.

Additionally, we transformed our old Atlantic Command in Norfolk, Virginia to Joint Forces Command to lead our joint experimentation efforts as well as to increase our efficiency on joint war fighting, since that is the way the Joint Chiefs feel, literally know that we are going to fight in the future. In fact, this command will be the lead agent for the Department of Defense in transforming our forces, transforming them organizationally, doctrinally, materially and technologically to deal with tomorrow's threats.

Finally, we are pursuing the technology necessary to defend our American citizens from the terror of a ballistic missile attack. But as all of you know, I am sure, change is always difficult. I am reminded of the story about the inventor, Robert Fulton, as he tested his first steamboat on the Mississippi River. A crowd gathered on the riverbank while the engineers tinkered with the machinery the crowd started chanting, "It will never start, she'll never start." and finally amid the smoke and the sparks, the big paddle wheel started to turn and the steamship moved out into the Mississippi. The crowd stood back in awe. There was dead silence for a few moments and then the chants started again, "She'll never stop, she'll never stop".

We have more than a few skeptics, as well, standing on the sidelines. There are some that are saying that the ideas we are proposing won't work, some who are saying they won't work well enough. There are many that chant, "Don't change," while others chant, "You are not changing fast enough". Well, skeptics notwithstanding, I believe that it is imperative that we go full throttle and continue to transform our forces to ensure that we have the capability to defend our homeland against a wide range of relatively new threats as well as to continue to protect our interests around the globe. While we have made a good beginning, I tell you this morning there is still much to be done. We need to take the awesome capabilities that we have today in the world's finest army, Navy, air force, Marine Corps and coast guard and continue our efficiency on combining them operationally into a force that is highly trained, highly interoperable, interconnected, maneuverable and even more lethal than they are today.

I would also submit that in order to do this effectively, we need to overhaul the archaic procurement and business practices that we suffer under in the department today. For example, today in the Pentagon it takes longer to develop, test and deploy a new system, so long to do this that it is often outdated almost by the time it is fielded. Of course in today's environment rapid technological change, that could be a fatal flaw. We need to ensure that our equipment is designed and tested to work in a joint environment to meet the joint war fighter's requirements rather than the requirements of the individual services as we did throughout the Cold War.

Also, I am not in favor, as some have proposed, of doing away with the great traditions,

the cultures and the unique capabilities of the services. Rather, we are looking at ways to bring together these great complimentary capabilities that each of our services has, so that we can form a seamless, unified web with maximum combat capability to support our joint commanders in the field.

Finally, no matter how high-tech and interoperable we get with our equipment, to make this overall transformation effort really work, we need to make sure we continue to recruit and to retain the high quality people that we have today. If we only transform our systems, then we have not achieved true transformation. For it is our people, as all of you know, that give America its greatest competitive advantage.

During the 1920s, the Italian Air Power theorist, Charles Dewey said, "Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adopt themselves after it occurs." I think this philosophy can be seen in the on going efforts of President Bush, Secretary Rumsfeld and the Joint Chiefs as we work to change and transform America's military.

When I look out into the faces of this crowd, I see so many very proud and great veterans. I am reminded of how much America owes those who have served in uniform. I see in your faces this morning the hallowed grounds of Normandy, Guadalcanal, Leyte Gulf; of Heartbreak Ridge and the Punch Bowl, Khe Sanh, Thud Ridge, and the Ia Drang Valley and so many other deadly fields of fire where rivers of precious American blood flowed to protect and preserve prosperity and freedom as we as Americans enjoy. So transformation is a must. We owe it to our men and women in uniform, we owe it to you, our veterans, who showed us the way ahead.

You, too, can help us with this mighty cause. Our challenge is to educate and inform Americans of all ages about the importance of a strong national defense and history. The history that you, here in front of me today, helped to write, is the best tool we have to drive this lesson home. Someone once said, "Those who don't heed the lessons of history are doomed to repeat it". With your help, we can avoid complacency and we can get the resources necessary to affect real change.

As I look at my watch I see that I probably have spoken for too long already and I am reminded of what Henry the VIII said to each of his eight wives, "I won't be keeping you much longer". Let me wrap this up by saying as always it has truly been a great privilege to be with you this morning and I thank you so much for this wonderful award which means a tremendous amount to me.

Earlier this summer, back in Washington I told my staff that no matter what scheduling pressures come up during the final weeks of my term, I wanted to make sure that I could attend The American Legion convention so that I could say good-bye and so that I could thank you one last time, our great veterans, for what you have meant to America, what you continue to mean to America. This was one event that I did not want to miss.

As many of you know, I will retire from service in a few months, after a short thirty-eight years. It has been an extraordinary journey, both for me and my family. The best part has been the honor, indeed the privilege, of serving with real American heroes, individuals like you, America's fighting men and women. Soon it will be time for me to take that last salute and it will be difficult. I am comforted by the fact that I will acquire a new title upon retirement, Hugh Shelton, veteran.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: General Shelton, thank you.

Our next guest is the 47<sup>th</sup> man to hold the top elected office in the state of Texas. He has proven to be a visionary leader who can work with members of both parties. He is an

Air Force veteran, an Eagle Scout and a life member with twenty-four years of continuous membership in Travis Post 75 in Mineral Wells, Texas, the Governor of Texas, the Honorable Rick Perry.

**Address: Honorable Rick Perry  
Governor of the State of Texas**

It is the highest of honors to be in the presence of men and women who have kept this blessed nation free. I am proud to be in your company and proud to be a life-time member of the greatest organization on earth, The American Legion. It is good to see my lifelong friend, John Brieden, over there, a good Aggie and former roommate, American Legion's Legislative Commission Chairman. After our first year in the Corps Cadets in the Texas A&M, John and I spent a summer going door-to-door selling Bible books in Missouri. He needed it. For those of you here visiting from out of state, if you think Texas is hot in August, you ought to try Festus or Crystal City in Missouri by the Mississippi River.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this very unique and wonderful city that has great ties to the Texas of our past, plays a vital role to the military of the United States and it is a direct connection to the future of the great state of Texas. Thank you for choosing San Antonio for the site of your 83<sup>rd</sup> National Convention. The dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, our nation finds itself in a very enviable position. We are the most prosperous nation during the most prosperous of times. Our citizens enjoy opportunities through technology that could not even have been conceived just a few decades ago. We are truly a world power with no equal.

But prosperity mixed with apathy is a recipe for decline. Americans must never forget the sacrifices that have been made so that we may always be free. Only through the remembrance do we have the capacity to avoid the mistakes of our past, to treat those who have with dignity and those who will serve with dignity.

I remember my service quite fondly. As a farm boy from the rolling plains from west Texas I began a rather magnificent, eye opening journey as a C-130 pilot in the United States Air Force. My service took me to some fascinating places, some not so fascinating: Europe, South America, Middle East. I got to observe a lot of difference cultures and traditions, a lot of different governments. What I soon learned was that there is no place like America, there is no place that gives greater values to individual freedom to serve your fellow man, to important virtues like strong families and close communities. America is a special land, a land of courageous people. Generations of Americans who have risen up to defend the wonderful ideal of freedom, recognizing that freedom is only precious if you are willing and have the resolve and the morale indignation to defeat those who would suppress it.

Over the course of the last century, young soldiers in the dawn of their lives considered to calling of liberty to be an ideal, greater than personal safety as they set sail on vessels that would take them to foreign lands, to uncertain fates. For many it would be their last trip across the ocean as they enshrine foreign soil with the sacrifice of their blood.

One such soldier was Captain Ed Land. He was from Houston, Mississippi and was so anxious to engage in the war that he joined up with the Royal Canadian Air Force, headed off to England to fly with Eagle Squadron, November of 1941. One of his letters home to

his brother Frank appears in the recently published book entitled, *War Letters*\*. It is compiled by Andrew Carroll. If you allow me I would like to share just a portion of one of those letters with you. He said,

In forty-five minutes, I'll be eating and filling myself full of hot tea to last me through the night. Shortly after I will roaring down the runway and climbing slowly into the gathering darkness, those little red lights there on the ground flickering away until they all at last removed from my sight. Behind me and with me, my crew will be going about their duties, all enveloped in the black curtain and the flight that is around us, holding us there in its bosom. All is quiet except for the sweet steady drone of my engines and the whisper of the radio waves coming through my earphones. Before me; my instruments, my controls, my love, my life. Ahead of us all, what? Only God can say. I know I don't have much longer to live. Don't ask me how I know or can say that. I am just being fatalistic. I can see it, feel it around me and about me. My pals one of these mornings will all be sitting down to breakfast without me. A few empty chairs, someone raising his eyebrow in silent query. Someone else nodding in silent confirmation. A moment's reverence, silence and quiet and then all will continue as before.

You see Captain Land was right. About five months later his plane plummeted into the ocean just off the coast of Denmark and he was never to be seen or heard from again.

Last summer I returned with my father to one of the greatest monuments of loving sacrifice, the beaches of Normandy. We saw the hundred foot cliffs that Earl Rudder's Rangers scaled in the face of withering enemy fire. We saw the remnants of the enemy fortification, the German pill boxes that represented the front wall of oppression of the entire European continent. We walked through the American cemetery in Omaha Beach, observing the endless rows of white crosses and Stars of David that marked the remains of thousands of young American soldiers who rest in eternal peace. On those hallowed grounds you can hear their memories whispering, whispering in the wind, telling a solemn story never to be forgotten, returning to a place that my father hadn't seen since he was a nineteen year-old crewman on a B-17.

It was truly an amazing experience for both of us. At the same time it was really hard to know exactly what he was thinking. Like so many of his generation, he didn't talk about it much. Perhaps it sparked memories of young lives hardly lived, you know, that perturbing question, "Why him, not me?" Perhaps he saw in the eyes of a young liberated French child the ability to dream again about tomorrow. It is such acts of heroism, not just by a World War II generation, but by the men and women of World War I and Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Bosnia. They are hard to recognize appropriately with mere words. We can never fully repay our debt of gratitude such brave souls like those and like those of you in this room today. It is our duty to never forget what you have done and to honor your great sacrifices as long as you shall live.

In this last legislative session, I was proud of two things we did particularly for our veterans in Texas. First, I signed a Bill that authorizes the Texas Veterans Land Board to create up to seven additional cemeteries in Texas. John [Brieden], you worked long and hard with us to see that sign into law. It means that more of our veterans will be able to be buried

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\* *War Letters: Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars*, edited by Andrew Carroll, published by Scribner, 2001.

close to their homes. Critical to funding that effort is a Constitutional Amendment that will be decided this coming November and if approved, it will allow the state to transfer excess funds from the Veterans Land Fund over to the Veterans Housing Program, the Veterans State Cemetery Fund. That money is going to be used to maintain and operate these new cemeteries. The efforts of our Texan veterans in promoting this amendment, critical to its passage and I want to encourage everyone of you to take your cause to the Texas voters.

Secondly, we honored those World War II veterans who left to serve overseas in the war effort before finishing their high school course of work. Because of a new law in Texas, World War II veterans who never had the chance to finish high school can now get that diploma they long deserved. There are a lot of reasons we must honor and remember our nation's veterans. First and foremost, because this nation made an unbreachable contract with each and every one of you in return for your service. It is the right thing to do. Secondly, young men and women would judge the value of their service, even when to serve or not, based on the dignity of which we treat our former soldiers. And lastly, only in remembering do we have the capacity to prevent past tragedies from visiting the citizens of the world and only by preventing future wars do we fully honor those who died so others would not have to.

Let me share one final thought with you. Having won two World Wars and the subsequent Cold War, we must not forget that while the world has changed, there are those who would still seek to extinguish the lamp of freedom, if we let our guard down. That is why I think President Bush is 100% right. America must pursue development of a missile defense shield so that the freedom we enjoy is not jeopardized by the attack of some rogue nation.

President Bush is right about another thing. The morale and the readiness of our military should not, and cannot, take a back seat when the Congress funds its priorities. The relative peace of our time is not a justification for military cutbacks. It is affirmation that we must always be ready to defend our values, our friends and the cause of freedom. I think often about what must have entered the minds of our citizen soldiers at times of war. Those young boys who ran across foreign beaches, foreign fields amidst that withering enemy fire, who huddled in frozen foxholes wondering if the next shell would land too close, who took flight or to the sea, not knowing if it would be their last voyage. I say they—in many cases I mean you—many of you when your nation needed you the most. You ran toward the sound of the guns when you were called. Certainly you must have asked the question, "Is this really worth it?"

In peace, children bury their fathers. In war, fathers bury their children. Laurence Binyon [1869-1943] once wrote about the courage of the young soldier in his poem *For the Fallen*. It says:

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down the sun and in the morning  
we will remember them.

I am here today to say to those who gave lives and limb, those who served with honor because your nation called, we remember you, we will never, ever forget the great debt this country owes you. We remember what you endured and what you suffered so we might not. We are honored to share the American heritage, the American ideals for which you shed your blood.

I am blessed and humbled to be a part of this great organization. There are a great many who were not so blessed to come home, never had the privilege of raising a family, who never experienced a world at peace. They were so young, so virtuous. May they rest in eternal peace, may the old soldiers, myself included in this room today, be remembered for what you have done for the remainder of your days on earth and beyond.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: On behalf of National Convention Corporation, we have a little gift we would like to give to you to remind you of our wonderful Convention here in San Antonio.

... Video starts and finishes on the subject of the Children's Miracle Network..

**Presentation: Children's Miracle Network  
Merlin Olsen**

It is truly an honor to be part of this outstanding dais, to be a part of this wonderful program. It is an honor to be with you today, The American Legion family.

Ralph Waldo Emerson explained success like this: "To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children ... to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."

While success holds different meanings for everyone, I believe Emerson was right. Over the years, I have seen different types of success be it through sports, on the football field, in the entertainment industry, or in the business sphere. But as a parent, a grandparent, a neighbor, and a friend, I can tell you that no success feels better or means more than that of helping a child.

I am here today because of your success. You have always answered the call of a grateful nation, protecting our glorious flag and our nation's honor. You are again answering that call today by helping to make the world a better place by helping children live stronger, healthier lives. Your support of Children's Miracle Network has been astounding, and I am honored to be with you today.

Children's Miracle Network is just what its name implies, a network of hospitals, care givers, corporate sponsors, media partners, and individual donors who give their time and money to make miracles happen for children. With the unselfish support of this international network of people, we work every day to generate funds for kids at 170 children's hospitals across North America.

When Children's Miracle Network was started in 1983, medical care for children needed much improvement, and our network of miracle makers is doing just that. They do everything in their power to prevent kids from suffering and help them live healthier, happier lives. These are people who like yourselves understand the true meaning of success.

Success implies that if I worry about feeding myself, I must also feed my neighbor. It's not enough that I have a roof over my head, I must also help others find shelter from the storms in their lives. I can not be successful if I doctor my own wounds, but do nothing to heal the pain I see in the world around me. When you reach beyond your normal limits and strive to meet and exceed your goals to help children, by your very actions you are once again successful.

I have seen and met many champions and many great people, but at Children's Miracle

Network we use the word 'champion' a little differently. True champions come from every walk of life. They face different challenges, but always persevere. True champions have a personal strength that not only guides them in their pursuits, but also serves as a beacon to others, inspiring them to extend their reach beyond that which they ever dreamed possible. The champions we encounter through Children's Miracle Network are heroes in every sense of the word. Infants, kids, young adults, and everyone of them have survived their ordeals using personal strength, facing far greater challenges than I have seen on the gridiron or any other field of competition. These kids are true champions. There is nothing more heartbreaking or uplifting than a child who valiantly battles a disease, injury, or birth defect. In the moments of their deepest sorrows, they rise above their challenges and boldly face them. They have inspired me and I know they have inspired you. When you meet a child like Shelly, who was featured in the introduction, it changes you. Ladies and gentlemen let me introduce you to a real champion, Shelly Urdiales.

These are the kind of champions we are talking about. These children and their families are real life champions. Those who work to help them are, too and you are all true champions of kids. Each year 14 million of these little champions are helped by Children's Miracle Network hospitals, 14 million. Multiply the story by even one Miracle Child you know by 14 million, children like Shelly and I think you will begin to see the impact you are making on America's future.

Legion family is 4.5 strong and we are asking you to join us to fight the battles that are yet to be won, to ensure America's strength will continue with the freedom in tact. Strong minds and bodies for our future leaders is the first and most important legacy we can give to the next generation. With everything you do, you inspire people to be their best, donating time, money and love where it makes the most difference. We believe in the work you do for hospitals, for children, for the communities we all live in.

So what constitutes a successful person? I'd say a successful person is one who reaches out from where they are and chooses to make a difference in the lives of others. A successful person as Emerson said, "Will ensure that at least one life breathes easier because they have lived and have done their part". Certainly, you already know this with your efforts on behalf of children. Nothing is more rewarding than the megawatt smile of an injured child who just learned again to walk like Shelly. Nothing can replace a hug from a little girl who just learned to run on artificial legs.

Thank you again for inviting me here today to share in your celebration. I leave you with the words of Winston Churchill who said, "We make a living from what we get, we make a life from what we give".

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER KOUTZ: The American Legion relationship with CMN is outstanding and I perceive a growing cooperation in the future.

The President of the United States and Laura Bush are in the building. While we will have a little short pause here, Peter Ole strike up some music.

...Peter Ole plays music.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER KOUTZ: The President of the United States and Mrs. Laura Bush.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: At this time, I want to introduce my counterpart the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, Mrs. Kristine West for a special presentation.

**Presentation: Woman of the Year Award**  
**Laura Bush**  
**First Lady of the United States**

NATIONAL PRESIDENT WEST: It is the distinct privilege of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary to select the recipient for our Woman of the Year. In previous years, our organization has given this prestigious honor to great women, such as Elizabeth Dole, Marilyn Quail, Erma Bombeck, Christine Todd Whitman, and Kathleen Townsend. Today, I am so proud and privileged to add the name of the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush to this impressive list.

As the First Lady of Texas, Mrs. Bush worked tirelessly to promote education and literacy in the state. Her background as a teacher and librarian as well as an avid reader motivated her to launch several initiatives for Texas. In 1998, she started an early childhood development initiative to help parents and care givers prepare infants and young children for learning and reading. The First Lady Family Literacy Initiative for Texas complimented important school reform efforts and pre-kindergarten to the third grade level.

Mrs. Bush also was instrumental in organizing the Texas Book Festival in 1996. And to date, more than 350 Texas public libraries have received grants totaling more than \$890,000. A native Texan, the former Laura Welsh, earned a Bachelors Degree in Education from Southern Methodist University and a Master's Degree in Library Science from the University of Texas at Austin. In 1977, she married George W. Bush and in 1981 they became the proud parents of twin girls, Barbara and Jenna, named after their grandmothers. It is my distinct honor to present the 2001 American Legion Auxiliary Woman of the Year Award to the First Lady of the United States of America, Laura Bush.

MRS. LAURA BUSH: Thank you all very much. I'm so thrilled to be here today. I want to tell all of you how much I appreciate this award from the American Legion Auxiliary. I'm honored to be included on the roster of the remarkable women who have received this award. These women are leaders whom I respect and admire very much, people such as Governor Christine Todd Whitman and Elizabeth Dole, and of course, the incomparable Erma Bombeck, who was a great lady. She said, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I wouldn't have a single bit of talent left. And I could say to Him, 'I have used everything you gave me.'"

In this room, we have a group who uses everything given to you, from individual talent to a network of resources. And you use all of these assets to make our country a better place. You make a huge difference in so many lives, from older veterans to our youngest citizens. I salute your commitment to education, especially your work with the America Reads Program. In this one effort alone, the American Legion Auxiliary devoted nearly 19,000 hours to reading with, and tutoring, thousands of America's children. I'm pleased to stand here today and applaud you for that.

Bombeck also said, "Children make your life important." They really do. And President Bush and I will never forget that. That's what motivates us and shapes our goals and our efforts for the future. So on behalf of the children of America, I accept this award. Thank you so much for honoring me.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Our special guest this morning is making his second address to our delegates in just 51 weeks. He was with us last year in Milwaukee as a candidate for the nation's highest office. A former pilot of F-102s for the Texas Air National Guard, the first Texas governor to be elected to consecutive four year terms, a man



who has promised to strengthen the military and help us achieve a constitutional amendment to protect the flag of America, please welcome a member of The American Legion Post 77, the President of the United State, the Honorable George W. Bush, Jr.

**Address: George W. Bush  
President of the United States**

Thank you for that warm welcome. Welcome to my home state—we need the rain. I appreciate you bringing that from all over the country. And I want you to know that you are in a military town. People of this city are always proud to honor those whose serve and those who wear the uniform today.

Mr. Mayor, thank you for your hospitality. I know on behalf of all the folks who come to this convention, they thank you and your able staff and the good folks of San Antonio for being such great hosts to this wonderful convention. It is an honor for San Antonio to host you as it is an honor for me to stand before my fellow Legionnaires as the Commander-in-Chief of the United States military. And it was a higher honor to escort to this podium the Legion Auxiliary's Woman of the Year. You couldn't have made a finer choice!

I thank Ray Smith, the National Commander, for giving me a chance to come and I thank him for his service. I thank Kristine West for her service as well. I thank Bob Spanogle, the National Adjutant, and the man who runs your Washington office, John Sommer, for working so closely with my administration. I welcome members of my cabinet who are here, Tony Principi, and Elaine Chao. And I understand Henry Bonilla, the congressman from this area is here and want to say hello to Henry and his wife, Deborah. Finally, I want to introduce a fine man who is making a great governor for Texas, my friend, the 47<sup>th</sup> governor of the state of Texas, Rick Perry. Rick, you need to know, we just came in from Crawford, Texas and a lot of folks down there can't wait to vote for you.

The American Legion was chartered the years after World War I, just about the time that Dwight Eisenhower was a junior officer living right here in San Antonio, Texas at Fort Sam. You've seen wars and the aftermath. You received millions into your ranks. You've seen our culture change for better, and sometimes for worse. Yet from that founding day in 1919, to this very day, The American Legion has never compromised its principles. As General Douglas MacArthur said at your 1951 convention, The American Legion has been invincibly faithful to God and to Country.

Those of us honored to serve in high office have commitments of our own to our nation's veterans. I made my own commitments last year when we met in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Those commitments are now becoming policies and the needs of our veterans are once again priorities of our government. If you've worn the uniform you know just how efficiently government can sometimes work. When government needed your services, it moved pretty fast—there weren't many delays. And that is exactly how government ought to operate in repaying you for your service in giving you the benefits you earned.

Some of you are among the thousands of veterans whose claims have been delayed, or sadly enough, lost in the bureaucracy. In my direction to the Department of Veterans Affairs, it has begun to change the way it does business. And I put a good man in charge, my friend and your friend, Tony Principi. Tony is conducting a top to bottom review of the VA claims processing. Reform is begun and were are starting where need is greatest.

At present, there are more than 600,000 pending applications. A full 53,000 of them having been pending for more than a year. Many were filed by veterans over the age of 70. Think about that. Here are thousands of men who served their county in Korea and World

War II, or both. The last thing they need to hear from any federal office is more routine excuses. That's wrong. And this administration is going to get it right.

Under-secretary Principi's claims are being given the highest priority. They will be brought to a fair resolution without excuses and without delay. I have also set the goal in improving cooperation between the VA and the Pentagon and proving care to those who served. By Executive Order, I have created a task force to recommend major reforms to the delivery of health care to veterans and military retirees. Two distinguished Americans will lead the task force, Dr. Gail Wilensky, one of the nation's leading authorities on health policy and former Congressman Jerry Solomon, a long time veteran's advocate, who served our nation as a Marine in the Korean Conflict. I'm pleased to announce that Bob Spanogle of The American Legion has agreed and will serve on this task force to represent The American Legion.

My administration is also serious about implementing the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act to ensure high quality care. In my first budget, I asked Congress for an additional one billion dollars for veteran benefits and services. Secretary Principi recently announced six new centers for Parkinson's Disease research and care and 41 new outpatients clinics in 28 states, all the better to serve our nation's veterans.

In the budget I submitted, veterans are a priority. My budgets will also discharge and fulfil the most basic responsibility for the present to provide for the security of the United States. And in that responsibility a President needs capable partners. And I have chosen well. I receive outstanding policy advice from Dr. Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell. I am so pleased that Don Rumsfeld is back for a second tour at the Pentagon and the nation has not had a finer Vice-President than Dick Cheney. Well, maybe it's a tie.

Last week in Crawford, I had the honor of selecting a new chairman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to replace a good and honorable man who served our nation well, and that was Gen. Hugh Shelton. I picked a native of Kansas City, Missouri, Air Force General Richard Myers. And as Vice-Chairman I picked the first Marine ever, General Peter Pace. I have assured both men, and every man and woman serving today, that the services will receive the support and means they need to operate. I recently signed a bill allocating over two billion dollars in supplemental appropriations for military pay, benefits, and health care.

In order to boost the morale of our military, it starts with taking care of our people. But there's more. This budget I submitted to Congress makes national defense a priority. I've asked Congress to provide the largest increase in military spending since Ronald Reagan was the President and Commander-in-Chief of the United States.

And to meet any dangers, our administration will begin building the military of the future. We must, and we will, make major investments in research and development. We are committed to defending America and our allies against ballistic missile attacks, against weapons of mass destruction held by rogue leaders and rogue nations that hate America, hate our values and hate what we stand for. It's a dangerous world. We have a clear eye for foreign policy. We recognize that it is a dangerous world. I know that this nation still has enemies and we cannot expect them to be idle. That is why security is my first responsibility. I will not permit any course that leaves America undefended. In all of these efforts, I hope to have the support of the good people in this room.

The American Legion is one of the most respected institutions in our nation and one of the most familiar. After all, in the main streets all across America, the Legion Hall itself is the center of civic life, a place for speeches; sometimes too long are heard. This is a place where Scout troops meet. This is where special events are celebrated. Recently, I had the honor of welcoming the leaders of tomorrow, those of Boys and Girls Nations to the White

House. I applaud you for your efforts in promoting character in our young.

I also can't thank you enough for promoting baseball as the American past time. For the nearly 15,000 posts, including 3 million members, the Legion helps to make America better every single day. You are recognized not merely as an organization of interests but as importantly, as an organization of values. You represent an ethic of service when you teach the values of honor, and patriotism and personal responsibility. You teach by example and when you speak of the American flag and the legal protection it deserves, you speak with authority and you are right.

You may have heard recently this past month that I have been outside of Washington. I set up a western White House right up the road in Crawford, Texas. But I have been spending a lot of time traveling the heartland of America. I'll do more traveling this fall, speaking of my agenda and the values behind it. I plan to speak about the value of service and good citizenship that sustains our country. That's where the greatest of America shines through, not in the halls of government but in the character of our citizens. One of the important goals of my administration is to invigorate the spirit of involvement of our citizens, to make sure that no one is left out of our American dream, I've created an office of faith-based community initiatives in the White House. I'm asking Congress to join me in my efforts. It's time to bring new support and new resources to institutions that help people in need when people of faith provide social services and a love that is needed. Government must welcome them with open arms and not discriminate faith-based programs in America.

Oh, there is a lot we got to get done this fall and I'm looking forward to getting back to work. In the coming weeks, Congress will be going to what they call a conference committee on a patient's bill of rights. I support a good bill that has already passed the House, one that serves patients first and doctors, the one that will not encourage frivolous lawsuits that could conceivably throw people off their health care insurance. I'm hopeful that they will move quickly and get a good bill on my desk. On Medicare I've laid out commonsense principles for strengthening the program, including long overdue coverage for prescription drugs in Medicare.

As parents, grandparents, concerned citizens, all off you are concerned about the quality of our public schools and I appreciate your involvement. We want the best for our children. And no question it begins making sure that every child is educated and making sure our public schools not only teach how to read, write, add and subtract, but teach our children the values that have been sustained over a long period of time, the values necessary to become good citizens. There is a bill that passed the House, there is a bill that passed the Senate. When they get back—I hope they don't play politics with the education bill—they need to get it to my desk quickly so that I can sign and reform public schools across America.

Of course, the members will be coming back to consider a piece of legislation as well as to make necessary spending decisions. So far this year, the signs have been pretty good about how they are going to spend your money. We got a bipartisan budget passed. This important guideline helps us to spend taxpayers' money. In record time as well, Congress passed, I signed, and the mailman is now delivering the largest tax-cut in a generation.

Our economy began slowing down last year, and that is bad news. I'm deeply worried about the working families all across the country. According to today's GDP [Gross Domestic Product] figures which we are covering, it is very slow in coming. But with the tax reduction already in place, Americans will have more of their own money to spend, to save, and invest, the very things that make our economy grow. Tax relief is exactly the right

kind of thing, the right prescription at the right time for the American economy. Now there are some who are second-guessing tax-relief. You hear the voices beginning to filter out of home states. I presume those who now oppose tax relief are for raising your taxes. That would tie an anchor on our economy and I can assure you I won't allow it.

The next few weeks, Congress will face some critical choices and some old temptations. I'm asking them to let go of some of the old ways of doing business in Washington, D.C. Most of you have been around long enough to know how the process works. Often the important things are put off to the last. And in the meantime, lots of new spending gets thrown in. Near the end of the process, suddenly we hear that Congress is about to go over the budget. So the items that have been saved for last are the one most likely to get cut. And guess what usually has been saved for the last—the defense bill, leaving our national security at the mercy of budget gains and last minute cuts. This year we might even see our administration's two highest priorities—education and national defense—being played off against each other. That's the old way of doing business and it's time to stop. We may have different agendas in Washington but we all have the same basic obligations, we must start with the things that matter most to the future and security of our country. This time forward, let us put education and national defense at the first of the line, not at the last.

I return to Washington tomorrow ready to make my case, and ready to work with folks on both sides of the aisle. Dick Cheney and I didn't seek our offices so we could settle in and mark time. We didn't come to rubberstamp the status quo. We came to challenge old assumptions and to provide new directions. We came to get something done for the country and to change the tone in our national discourse. I'm proud of the progress we've been making, yet there is a lot to do. I realize that the American people are counting on us. You've given me a perfect send-off. I leave honored by your support and grateful for your service to our great land.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you Mr. President for sharing your vision with us. We look forward to working with you to ensure our national defense remains the best in the world. Mr. President, on behalf of the National Convention Corporation of Texas we would like to give you a little memento that we are delighted to be in the great state of Texas and most especially the city of San Antonio.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Thank you very much.

...Peter Ole plays music as the President is escorted off the stage.

**Presentation: National Education Award  
Tom Brokaw, NBC News**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Now we present the National Education Award. The award is presented to a man who is dedicated to our country's veterans. Through his dedication he has renewed interest in learning about veterans, about children and educators. I am sorry that Tom Brokaw of NBC News can not be here with us live and in living color this morning. However, as a television anchorman, he can join us via video tape.

The video plays...Hi, I'm Tom Brokaw, New York, bringing greetings to all of you in San Antonio. I am sorry that I can't be there with you in person because The American Legion has been such an important part of my life dating back to my days as a child in South Dakota. Of course, I don't think I had a prouder moment than when I put on my American Legion baseball uniform. I won the American Legion Citizenship Award when I was in

eighth grade and then when I was a junior in high school I was elected governor of South Dakota Boy's State, another great American Legion program. So it has always been an important part of my life, but never more so when I began to write books about what I call, *The Greatest Generation*.

So many Legionnaires came across my path and I was happy to revisit, not only the wartime experiences, but all that they did for this country through their Legion, in their community and other fashion when they came back from the war. So I am especially honored that you have given me this education award. I am pleased to have any association I can with your great organization.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Mr. Brokaw's award will be shipped to him along with a video copy of this presentation.

Our next guest is a woman who has strong executive talent, compassion and commitment to helping people build better lives. Those are not my words, but rather they are the words of President Bush. It is apparent that the U.S. Senate agrees with that assessment. They confirmed her nomination as Secretary of Labor just nine days into the Bush administration. As the nation's largest veteran's organization, we have a keen interest on how the Department of Labor provides help to our comrades. Welcome the Secretary of Labor, the Honorable Elaine Chao.

**Address: Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of the Department of Labor**

Congratulations on another tremendous year of growth in The American Legion's membership. I am so thrilled to be with you today, and it is a great honor to follow our President as a speaker.

We all know that since President George W. Bush took office, a new spirit of patriotism is returning to America. Men and women are proud to wear the uniform again, and President Bush is restoring the military through proper training, compensation and material support. America is once again the strong defender of peace and freedom at home and abroad.

Now, the Department of Defense is charged with overseeing the military, but I'm proud to have a role as well. It is the work of the Department of Labor to support America's military personnel, their families and their futures.

Now, as you know, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is changing faster than anyone could have imagined. Workers have got to be prepared for change; they have got to have access to opportunities to acquire new skills throughout their working careers. America must modernize the military to keep our people free, and in the same way, America must also help modernize the work force to keep our people productive. You can count on this administration to help veterans succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy.

I'm particularly pleased to have two friends of The American Legion help me at the Department of Labor. They are Fred Murphy, once confirmed will be the Department's Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training Services and Chick Chicarella, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

The Veterans Employment and Training Service, or VETS, is my eyes and ears to the 15 million working veterans. With more than 60 years of experience in military and veterans advocacy, Fred and Chick will help veterans make the most of their military training, as well as make sure veterans receive the retraining that they may need to get good career building jobs in the civilian economy. So let me tell you a little bit about the initiative that we are

working on.

First, the Department of Labor will put out the welcome mat for veterans who are seeking a career in the federal work force. At the Department, I am making it an absolute top priority to hire these highly skilled, highly trained workers. The United States military is the premier work force training and development organization in the world, and I want to make sure that we're taking full advantage of this. Now, as you know, veterans preferences have been downgraded for the past eight years. Let me assure you, I am committed to reversing that trend. Veterans preference and federal employment must and will be maintained in this administration.

Second, the Department of Labor is aggressively cutting through red tape and making sure that its services are more veteran friendly. Thanks to the groundbreaking work of The American Legion, employment representatives and veterans will now have a web site built by vets. This is going to be enhanced gateway to help service members access civilian certification and licensing for skills that they have acquired in the military, and they are now going to get credit for it. But I know the technology can't do the job alone, so we need dedicated people behind the technology to work with veterans one on one. So, therefore, the Department's third initiative is to help states provide well-trained and well-equipped veterans employment specialists, throughout the Department of Labor's One Stop Career Job Centers throughout the country.

And fourth, the Department of Labor is partnering with other departments to reach out and expand our services to military families. I'm pleased to announce that the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor have launched two very high level working groups directly aimed at assisting service members and their families. Now I again am going to target veterans preferences, that's my theme, I'm going to drive that all the time.

The second is dedicated to helping the spouses of active duty military personnel. We want to open up our training program and our placement services to these worthy partners in our military preparedness. You know, sometimes the availability of training and a good job for a spouse is a difference between a service member staying or leaving the military.

Finally, I'm pleased to announce that I am re-instituting the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training. I'm going to nominate new members and call a meeting by the end of the year. And at this meeting, among other items, I want the committee members to take a fresh look at the VETS Program and its activities. Title 38 is due for a tune-up, and my Department is prepared to work with Congress, the state, The American Legion and other veterans service organizations to reinvigorate and modernize this program. We particularly want to reach out to disabled veterans and make sure that they share fully in the opportunity of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace. This a part of the President's new freedom initiative, a plan to help more Americans with disability into community life and workplace. The President is committed to finding new ways to go beyond what is mandated by law so that we can do what is required by conscious.

VETS would help government human resource specialists learn about disabled veteran's unique abilities and also their very strong work ethics. And most importantly, the program is going to encourage these personnel specialists to cut through the bureaucracy so that they can hire these skilled veterans. The Department of Labor is committed to improving the lives of America's veterans, and I want to thank you all for making all of this possible. The American Legion is leaving a lasting imprint on our nation. Throughout American history you have steadfastly defended the core values of our nation: individual liberty, opportunity, and personal responsibility. These values, I have to say, are not just slogans to me. As some of you know, I came to this country when I was a young child of

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age, not speaking a word of English. My family, like so many others, was inspired by the great ideals of this country. We came in search of freedom, hope and opportunity, and found them all in abundance. I'm proud to be a partner with you in extending that hope and opportunity to those who deserve it most, America's veterans.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I have an announcement to make that some of you are probably interested in. The World Champion American Legion Baseball Team is from Brookline, New Jersey. They won it five to two over Lewiston, Idaho. Congratulations to the team.

Outside the National Headquarters Building in Indianapolis proudly flies a flag for the Korean War's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration.

As a veteran of the Korean War, I'm proud to know that in the minds of millions, the "Forgotten War" isn't forgotten at all.

This morning, the Director of the Korean War 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Committee is with us. He is a highly decorated U.S. Air Force combat pilot with nearly 250 missions over North Vietnam. Yet, today he is responsible on a national level to fulfill the mission mandated by Congress: Recognize and honor the 1.8 million military veterans who served in the Korean War. Welcome to retired Air Force Major General Nels Running.

**Address: Major General Nels Running, Retired  
Director Korean War 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**

Thank you for the opportunity for a few minutes to address what to me is a mission from higher authority. When I was asked to submit my application to become the Executive Director of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration; I had mixed feelings. You've heard that expression before. In my case, the mixed feelings were of boy and of wonder, wondering why a Vietnam veteran, a school kid during the Korean War should have this opportunity. But I took the position with pride, and I'm proud to serve with twenty-four individuals from all services and the civilian sector, who are trying to make an impact and to fulfill the mission the Congress asked us: Reach out, find 1.8 million veterans of the Korean War, or the surviving families, and let them know that this nation does appreciate their sacrifices, their commitment; their courage.

The Republic of Korea, that land south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel on the Korean peninsula, is a remarkable beacon of freedom today. But 51 years ago, when the North Koreans invaded, and for the ensuing three years, the story was much more drastic. Laid waste by the Communist invasion, no one thought Korea could recover. The war did not end with a treaty. The war is a cease fire. The only thing preventing resumption today is the barbed wire fence, the mine fields, the barricades that keep the North forces from invading the South again.

You see, the objective that Kim Il Sung laid down has not been achieved, and so his son, the dynastic heir to the throne, sees that objective still. But the South Korea that we have today is 45 million people, now boasting the world's tenth largest economy, our nation's fourth largest trading partner. It is a miracle that was wrought out of the blood, sweat and tears of the 1.8 million American veterans and the thousands of our allies who joined with the Republic of Korea in its defense.

The Republic of Korea wishes to show its gratitude. In fact in 1951, the government of Korea offered the Korean War Service Medal as a symbol of its appreciation for the sacrifices of America and its veterans. The laws on our books prohibited receipt or wear of

foreign decoration. So our forces returned to the United States without that recognition being provided. As we were leading up to the Commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of that war, the Republic of Korea asked what can we do? We want to do something important and helpful. In fact, Congress had changed the law in 1954, but by that time, with everybody gone, the offer was laid aside and not executed.

So in 1999 the government of Korea asked, "Can we renew that offer? Would you allow those veterans to accept?" Secretary of Defense at that time, Colin [Powell], signed the letter that August and authorized the receipt and wear. The Department of Defense asked the Air Force to be the executive agent for receiving the medals from Korea and making distribution: identifying our veterans, the eligible veterans and making distribution of those medals here in the United States. In fact, you are almost sitting on that point of distribution because it is right out here in Randolph Air Force Base, at the Air Force Personnel Center, where the Awards and Decorations Division is processing applications and providing those medals. As of now, approximately 100,000 of our Korean War veterans have made their applications and received the medal. We need to do much more and I hope we could do it more quickly. The Air Force is adding permanent party personnel to that office to process those applications and they hope to eliminate a backlog which is now hovering around 25,000 by late this fall and then move on to the next couple of years.

The Commemoration runs through the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2003. I've asked the government, the Minister of National Defense in Korea to extend the period. Initially they thought they would make the offer just during the Commemoration. I've informed them of the difficulty in reaching out and finding veterans who are not registered in any official way with the U.S. government and perhaps, if not applied for benefits. They are there. They did their duty, they returned, they went into society and they helped build their societies and economies and their families in this nation. I think the government of Korea will approve that and we will extend the period. The Air Force has given me an indication they will continue to process applications as long as they are coming in.

Now, I have a message and a challenge. A week ago I was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the scene of last year's American Legion Convention and one of your sister organizations, another national veterans service organization is hosting its second annual convention in Milwaukee. I was given the opportunity to present a special award at that convention. That award went to the Department of Arizona which achieved a significant milestone in this partnership that we have across the land to reach and find the 1.8 million veterans of the Korean War. The Department of Arizona is the first Department to reach 100% of its Posts, having signed on as Commemoration partners. I wonder which Department of The American Legion will be the first to have 100% of its Posts signed on?

You know out here in the display hall, we have Major Ernie Parker, United States Army and Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Jerry Philips, manning our display and booth and they are available to sign you up on the spot if the Department head or Adjutant or whomever would care to get out there and see that table, that display and fill out an application on the spot. We are accessible on the worldwide net, [www.korea50mil](http://www.korea50mil). There is an electronic application on line. We have a toll free number. It doesn't cost you a penny, 866-KOREA50. Give us a call and we will tell you what you need to do.

The flag that Commander Smith talked about, flying outside the National Headquarters, is part of the package that you get. It doesn't cost you a cent. It just cost you the effort of making the application and the commitment. What is the commitment in a Commemoration partnership? It is to help us at the national committee reach out across this land and identify those Korean veterans. You know, the first day on the job, I looked at an e-mail that came



across the web site, from Sergeant United States Marine Corps. Phil wrote, "I can't believe that you are actually doing this after fifty years. After fifty years, do you mean to tell me that we are really going to be recognized and honored and thanked for the sacrifices we made? So many of my buddies did not return, but I know that their families will find this important as well, but this is unreal. Tell me it's true, tell me I'm not dreaming." Phil went on to say, "When I returned to the United States I wore my uniform to a local diner. Two of my older buddies were there. I knew that they were World War II veterans. And they looked at me and they said, 'Phil, what in the hell are you doing?' and he said, 'Well, where have you been?' 'I have been to Korea. 'These are my medals, I fought the Korean War.' 'What? What are you talking about?' They laughed so hard they almost fell on the floor." War? That was no war. We are the veterans of war. You've to be in combat kid. You were in a police action. Where is your billy club and your whistle?"

Well, Phil's reaction was not untypical of so many veterans. He went home, took his uniform off, put it away in the attic and set about the business of building a family and this nation's economy. Rejection, disavowal, just what veterans didn't need then and don't need now. I wasn't too sure that this was a story that applied across the board. I am researching and through the web, every now and then I get an opportunity to do a little surfing. I have come across a site in which I checking through the Congressional Record. I noted that in March of 1995, about three or four months before the dedication of the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, the Congress amended the Congressional charter of one of our national veterans service organization, amending that charter so that Korean War veterans could be included in the membership category. So I said, yes, it is true. If the charter excluded them, then I have no doubt that in many cases those who interpret the charter at the Post level, who would approve applications, that Korean War veterans were not considered to have been in combat.

Well, the Korean War certainly did not affect our land, nor the world in terms comparable to World War II. But you know, it is not a measure of size, it is not a comparison of 16.5 million veterans versus 1.8 because when a nation calls, when the United Nations calls, nations go to war. But how do nations go to war? You don't see the President, the Cabinet, the Joint Chiefs of Chief over there on the line. You get to the individuals. You get to the veterans who responded to the call. You get to those who were on active duty and went with their units. You get those who were in the National Guard, the Reserves, who were called up and you get those who answered the local community, your friends who called you to the draft. You didn't run off to Canada, Sweden or points east. You answered the call and that's where it gets real personal because it is the veteran, individually, one by one, yes, under the banner of the United Nations, but one by one, slugging it through those rice patties in the hottest summer in 1950 on record in Korea, and on into that bitter, coldest winter ever in Korea and subsequent winters, in a land which maybe called the Morning Calm, now and before, but was anything but during those three years of that war. 37,000 Americans shed their blood and lost their lives that Korea would remain free. 37,000 in three years. 100,000-plus bare permanent physical scars. There is no measure of the psychological impact. But we know that it is there, too. Yes, individually, in some, the sacrifices of the veterans who fought the Korean War measure against any to compare.

The first and only time an international organization, the United Nations lent its flag to combat forces. There have been fifty-three peacekeeping missions since then, but not combat missions. The first international coalition of twenty nations joined Korea and the United States in the defense of that land. The results of that as I said earlier, forty-five

million people living in freedom; appreciating the opportunity that the blood and sacrifices, the lives of the Korea War combating forces purchased for them. That is the price we paid and they know it. They add a second and a toast to this slogan that the veterans asked be placed on the Korean War Veterans Memorial. Freedom is not free. Freedom is not free. Freedom is not free.

Would you do this for me? Would you do this for the veterans? Would you, if there are representatives from all the Departments here convey the message, at least make folks aware? Ask each and every Post to sign on as a Commemoration partner? Why not seek those that are not members perhaps of a veterans service organization, those who felt rejection, have never come out? See if they can't come up with their DD214, their 215 or their National Guard 22, the paperwork you need to go along with the request and get them the Korean War Service Medal. But sign on as a Commemoration partner that you may help also, inform the local community. We can't do that from Washington, D.C. If our office were in Topeka or Omaha, or San Antonio we couldn't do it either.

We are twenty-four people trying to be effective, trying to reach out in support. We have lots of materials that come along with the Commemoration flag and the partnership. We offer, assistance, support and advise and help in making arrangements for ceremonies. If you are having a state convention, or a chapter meeting, a dinner or banquet; why not add the Korean War theme to it and honor some of those veterans. It is only a three-year period, this commemoration, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Let's put some purpose into our actions. Let's help each other that we may help ourselves.

I served three tours of duty in Korea, the 1980s and the 1990s, six years total. I cannot remember a day passing that a Korean didn't thank me for what America did for Korea. I think the least we could do is help facilitate the operation which would provide each and every veteran a memory, a recognition that Korea thanks you and our nation does, too. You are doing wonderful things in The American Legion at the grassroots level. I ask that you add the challenge of bringing out our Korean War veterans and letting them know. In turn, you do your nation yet another good deed.

#### **Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans**

Since The American Legion was founded, helping veterans work has been a key objection. Now it is time to extend special recognition to three employers for their outstanding record of making those jobs available to veterans. That special recognition comes in the form of The American Legion Employer of the Year Award. We recognize three such organizations as 2001 Employers of the Year. The awards are given in three categories: one for companies employing fifty or less people, one for companies employing from fifty-one to two hundred people and a third for companies with more than two hundred workers. Each is nominated by a Post and advances through Department and National competition levels.

The 2001 Employer of the Year in the under fifty category goes to Discount Printing of Winter Haven, Florida. Here to accept the award is General Manager, Wendy Colvin and one of her employees is Omer Smith, Past Department Commander of Florida.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER SMITH: They told me I could say a few words and I am not short on words usually. On behalf of Discount Printing of Winter Haven, Florida, I thank The American Legion for this prestigious award. The Department of Florida is extremely proud of this state's business community for their commitment of employing veterans. Thank you, Mr. Commander, for recognizing a member of our business

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community with their commitment to providing opportunity for a better quality of life for Florida veterans.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I would like to share what is on the award. It says, "The American Legion National Award, Outstanding Employer of the Year 2001, presented to Discount Printing for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention, San Antonio, Texas, August 29, 2001."

The award in the fifty to two hundred category goes Maine Machine Products of South Paris, Maine. Roland Sutton, Chairman and CEO is here to accept the award.

The award reads, "The American Legion National Award, Outstanding Employer of the Year 2001, presented to Maine Machine Products for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention, San Antonio, Texas, August 29, 2001."

ROLAND SUTTON: I thank the Foster Carroll, Post No. 72 in South Paris, Maine and the Department of Maine for nominating us and also the 25% of our working employees who are veterans. I also sincerely thank all of you for your efforts that provided me the opportunity to start and to build a business in the land of the free.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The award in the two hundred and more employees category goes to PEMCO Aeroplex, Inc. in Birmingham, Alabama. It is a pleasure to have the company's president and Chief Executive Office, Ray Hauck here to accept the award.

The award reads, "The American Legion National Award, Outstanding Employer of the Year 2001, presented to PEMCO Aeroplex, Inc. for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Convention, San Antonio, Texas, August 29, 2001."

RAY HAUCK: I am very proud to accept this award on behalf of the more than 700 veterans, both men and women at PEMCO Aeroplex where they proudly maintain our nation's military aircraft in Birmingham, Alabama. I want to commend The American Legion for the great work they do for our country.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Gentlemen, on behalf of The American Legion and all of our nation's veterans I extend to you our congratulations. Please keep hiring veterans and tell other businesses about the reliability and work ethics of veterans.

#### **Presentation: Employment Representative of the Year 2001**

It is an honor to make another presentation and recognition of employment efforts. Each year The American Legion recognizes top local veterans employment representative in the nation. The award is normally presented during a Department Convention. However, this individual has done such a remarkable job of placing veterans in jobs that we thought it best to honor him on this stage. The Employment Service Award to the Local Veterans Employment Representative for 2001 goes to a member of an American Legion Post 14 in Ponca City, Oklahoma, Michael Daugherty.

The award reads, "The American Legion National Award, Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year 2001. Presented to Michael E. Daugherty for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Oklahoma.

MICHAEL DAUGHERTY: Every morning when I go to work I think I am the luckiest person in the world. I get to work with veterans, I get to work with employers like these, I get the support of The American Legion and now I get this.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The Chair recognizes Joseph Caouette of New

Hampshire, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism for the purpose of a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Americanism  
Joseph Caouette, New Hampshire, Chairman**

Fifty-one (51) members of your Convention Committee on Americanism met at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, August 26, 2001, in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, to discuss matters of Americanism-related resolutions assigned to the committee.

The committee organized by electing Joseph E. Caouette, Jr. (NH), Chairman; and Larry Price (SD) as the Secretary.

The committee discussed 26 resolutions that were assigned to the group. The resolutions that were considered continue to reflect the desire by Departments of The American Legion to address matters of patriotism and government, and to maintain strong general Americanism programs that compliment the organization and benefit the Nation.

A motion was made and seconded that the Convention Committee on Americanism authorize the chairman and secretary to sign and deliver the report, on behalf of the committee, to the National Convention. Motion carried.

Twenty-six (26) resolutions were considered with two (2) approved, two (2) consolidated, nine (9) received and recorded, six (6) rejected, and seven (7) referred to the standing Americanism Commission.

**Recommended Action on Resolutions Were  
Approved and Consolidated**

**Resolution No. 170: Veteran's Day**

**Origin: Americanism**

**Submitted By: Americanism**

**(Consolidated with Resolutions 89 (IL) 146 (TX))**

WHEREAS, The National Commission on Federal Election Reform recommended in its report to the President the possibility of moving the observance of Veterans Day to the second Tuesday in November on even numbered years so that elections could be conducted on a national holiday; and

WHEREAS, Veteran's Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>, formerly called Armistice Day, is the time Americans unite to recognize the sacrifices and service of past and present members of the United States military; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that a Veterans Day ceremony should be a solemn occasion and observed on its traditional date of November 11; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion oppose any and all efforts that would designate Veterans Day on any day other than the traditional November 11<sup>th</sup> date.

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**Resolution No. 169: Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance**

**Origin: Americanism**

**Submitted: Americanism**

WHEREAS, Since the earliest days of our republic, Congress has exercised its constitutional power to establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization; and

WHEREAS, The Rules of Naturalization, as established by Congress, requires an oath of allegiance and renunciation of all prior allegiances as a condition of naturalization; and

WHEREAS, The Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance serves as a contract between the applicant for citizenship and the United States government in which the applicant, in return for the benefits and privileges received, agrees to

1. Support the United States Constitution;
2. Renounce all allegiance to any foreign state or sovereign;
3. Support and defend the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, both foreign and domestic;
4. Bear "true faith and allegiance" to the United States of America; and
5. Bear arms, perform noncombatant service, or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that naturalization is a privilege, not a right, to be granted only in accordance with the conditions established by the Congress; and

WHEREAS, A "Citizenship Roundtable" was created by NEC Resolution 28 (Oct. 1999) titled "Citizenship Naturalization Process" that established a working relationship between The American Legion and the Hudson Institute, an internationally recognized public policy research not-for-profit 501c (3) organization, and

WHEREAS, The Citizenship Roundtable opposes any revisions to the oath of allegiance that would dilute or eliminate the applicant's commitment, under oath, to the United States of America; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion opposes any and all changes to the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance, as used in naturalization ceremonies, that would dilute or eliminate any of the following important and necessary elements of the oath:

1. Support for the Constitution of the United States of America;
2. Renunciation of all allegiances to foreign states or sovereignties;
3. Support for and defense of the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic;
4. Bear 'true faith and allegiance' to the United States of America; and
5. Bear arms, perform noncombatant service, or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America.

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 13 (MA): Urge Purchase of American Made American Flags**

**Resolution No. 80 (IL): Support of The Boy Scouts of America**

**Resolution No. 105 (NY): English As The Official Language of The United States**

**Resolution No. 110 (NY): Proper Conduct Toward United States Flag At Olympics**

**Resolution No. 111 (NY): Oppose Efforts To Dissolve Charter of The Boy Scouts of America**

**Resolution No. 112 (NY): Support The Boy Scouts of America**

- Resolution No. 114 (NY):** Alternative Bilingual Education Programs  
**Resolution No. 130 (CT):** Reaffirmation of Commitment to a Flag Protection Constitutional Amendment  
**Resolution No. 136 (MN):** Restore Memorial Day To Its Traditional Date

**Referred to the Standing Americanism Commission**

- Resolution No. 38 (UT):** Educate America Act of 1994 and The Furtherance of Civic Education in Schools  
**Resolution No. 54 (ME):** Promotional Video for Boys State  
**Resolution No. 57 (PI):** Reopen Period for Filipino Filing of Naturalization Applications  
**Resolution No. 86 (IL):** Illinois Candidates for The Samsung Scholarship  
**Resolution No. 115 (WA):** Establish Volunteer Organizations for Tutoring Students  
**Resolution No. 145 (TX):** Establish American Legion Riders Motorcycle Association  
**Resolution No. 152 (PA):** Promotional Video for American Legion Baseball

**Rejected**

- Resolution No. 2 (AK):** The Attorney General of the United States Shall Enforce The Laws to Protect The US Flag from Desecration  
**Resolution No. 43 (CO):** Urge Flag Manufacturers to Include Flag Code in Information with Product  
**Resolution No. 48 (CO):** Rules Change for The National High School Oratorical Contest  
**Resolution No. 95 (WI):** Junior Shooting Sports Program Promotion  
**Resolution No. 104 (NY):** Eagle Scout Of The Year Criteria  
**Resolution No. 123 (MX):** Constitutional Authority To Be Clearly Stated in Acts Passed by Congress committee

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered Delegate, from the Department of New Hampshire, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We have a motion to adopt the report. Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

**Presentation: Department Awards**

With the adoption of the Americanism Report, it is appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards. The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Award is given annually rendering the most outstanding service during the twelve month period beginning August 1<sup>st</sup> to the Boy Scouts of America Program. This year's winner is the Department of New Jersey.

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Award is given to the Department within the United States documenting the greatest activity using The American Legion School Medal Program. This winning Department shows what can be accomplished by an active, involved organization. The winner is the Department of Florida.

**Presentation: William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy**  
**W. Lawrence Walker, Jr.**  
***San Antonio Express-News***

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is one of the most impressive awards that The American Legion presents during each National Convention. It is named in honor of one of America's journalism most prominent and influential figures. Given to the Department achieving the most outstanding results in conducting Americanism programs. The winning Department is selected by the National Americanism Commission on the basis of total resources, manpower as well as financial, devoted to Americanism activities during the Legion program year. With us today to announce the winner of the 2001 William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is W. Lawrence Walker, Jr., publisher of the *San Antonio Express-News*.

W. LAWRENCE WALKER, JR.: As Samuel Adams said, "What a glorious morning for America". I am not talking about the rain we finally received here in San Antonio. Believe me we needed it. If any of you had to use your umbrellas today, just remember the days are much cooler than they often at this time of the year.

President Bush noted how much the public service that all of you perform on behalf of The American Legion has involved the life for all Americans. A few years before this organization was chartered in 1919, William Randolph Hearst, a newspaper and magazine publisher was also showing his belief in bettering America by representing New York and the United States House of Representatives. Those of you that are familiar with Hearst's convictions know that while he was a master marketer; he also believed in the principles for which America was founded. Among those actions was freedom of the press. One of the reasons our country remains strong today is because the press continues to protect those freedoms we treasure from the world charlatans, cranks and demi-gods. Certainly we do right the first draft of history. We don't always get it just right. We do give voice to those otherwise would not be heard. We provide checks and balances, a sounding board, analysis and commentary about is happening in our city, state, county and the world. It is a responsibility that we take very seriously.

In some respects we see your mission as similar to ours. It was that goal to improve America and recognize those that do that prompted Mr. Hearst to acknowledge one of your Departments ever since 1938 or their extraordinary efforts to foster Americanism. This year we are honoring the Department of Ohio with the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy. Congratulations to each and every member of this Department as well as to the families who support them in the efforts from the heart.

Finally, I hope all of you are enjoying San Antonio and will come back and visit us many, many times. Try us the winter sometime. We will be sure to give you cool, sunny days and plenty of San Antonio hospitality.

**Presentation: National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year**  
**Corporal Jeffrey D. Goldsmith, Minnesota State Patrol**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The next order of business is to honor an individual for setting an example in community service as a law enforcement officer. Our 2001 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year has dedicated himself to the betterment of police service through leadership and integrity, training and education and sincere concern for mankind. He has earned twenty-nine commendations and forty-five letters of appreciation

in his seventeen year career with his Minnesota State Patrol. He earned his third Life Saving Award last year for clearing the obstructed airway of a car crash victim in 1999 in McCleod County, Minnesota. Recently he has been helping to obtain surplus cellular telephones for Minnesota school bus drivers so that they can report on the spot emergencies including reckless drivers who threaten the lives of students and motorists.

I am proud to present to The American Legion Police Officer of Year Award to Jeffrey Goldsmith, a member of Minnesota's Hutchinson Post 96.

JEFFREY GOLDSMITH: This is a great honor. On behalf of all law enforcement, I salute every American Legion member and veteran for their service to our country. By having your distinguished organization honor law enforcement officers, you make us proud to serve the public. Thanks to the Minnesota Delegation and his Commander, Ray DeZurik, special thanks to the Hutchinson, Minnesota Post including Past Department Commander, Roger Olson and Past Unit President, Berle Seeley who helped me through this whole process.

Fortunately, there are some lighter moments in my duties. Once I interviewed a driver after a minor traffic accident. I suspected he had too much to drink and he was very nervous and self-conscious. A sobriety test I asked him to take was to recite the alphabet. He said in a slurred voice, "A, B, C, D, W, F". Needless to say, he was arrested by one chuckling trooper.

On a serious note, I could not have persevered in my challenging career as a Minnesota State Trooper without two essential elements in my life. The first is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, my Savior, the second was a good wife. I dedicate this award to the memory of my wife, Julie, who fought a brave three-year battle with breast cancer. Unfortunately she lost that battle last November. She left with me the gift of my wonderful four-year old daughter, Katherine, who I would like to introduce to you right now. I also recognize all law enforcement officers who risk and who sometimes lose their lives protecting the public.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I would like to share with the inspiration on the plaque. It says, "America's finest. The American Legion National Law Officer of the Year Award presented to Corporal Jeffrey D. Goldsmith for distinguished service above and beyond your assigned duties. Rendered through selfless dedication to community service and professional achievements. By your demonstrated performance you have personified the police officer who represents America's finest. The American Legion congratulates you and wishes continued success in your career. Awarded August 29, 2001 at the 83<sup>rd</sup> National Convention in San Antonio, Texas." Congratulations.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The Chair now recognizes Clifton Williams of the Chapel of Four Chaplains for the purpose of an award.

**Presentation: Clifton Williams  
The Chapel of the Four Chaplains**

It is an honor for me to be here this afternoon with you. Let me tell you a little bit about the Chapel of the Four Chaplains and the award of which I am presenting this afternoon. Many stories have been written about the heroic acts of four chaplains aboard an Army troop ship on its way to Greenland. One such story follows.

It was the evening of February the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1943 and the U.S. Army Transport *Dorchester* was crowded to capacity carrying 902 servicemen, seaman and civilians. Once a coastal



luxury liner, the 5,649-ton vessel had been converted into an Army transport. The *USAT Dorchester* was one of three ships in convoy 19 on its way and moving steadily across the Atlantic toward Newfoundland toward Greenland. It was being escorted by three Coast Guard Cutters, the *Tampa*, *Esconaba*, and the *Comanche*. The ship's captain was concerned and cautious; earlier they had a submarine report. Danielson knew he was in dangerous waters, and even before he got the alarming information. German U-boats were constantly patrolling these waters and several ships had already been blasted and sunk. The *Dorchester* was only 150 miles from its destination, but the captain ordered the men to sleep in their life jackets and their clothing. But many of the soldiers sleeping deep down in the ship's hull disregarded the order because it was uncomfortable and hot. Others ignored it because it was simply uncomfortable.

On February the 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:55 a.m. a periscope broke the chilly waters of the Atlantic. Through the cross hairs, an officer of a submarine spotted the *Dorchester*, gave the order and fired a torpedo. The hit was very decisive, deadly, striking the starboard side of the ship far below the waterline. Danielson alerted that the ship was taking water and rapidly sinking. It would go under the waves in approximately 27 minutes.

Tragically, the hit below the waterline had knocked out all the power, releasing steam and ammonia. It knocked out all the electricity, meaning no communications. Luckily, the cutter, *Comanche*, saw the explosion and responded and rescued 79 survivors. The cutter, *Esconaba*, circled the *Dorchester* and rescued an additional 102. The third cutter, the *Tampa*, continued escorting the other two vessels.

Aboard the *Dorchester*, panic and chaos set in. The blast had killed scores of men. Many more were seriously wounded. Others were stunned by the explosion, groping in the darkness. Those sleeping without clothing were roused up topside where they were confronted first by the blast of cold air, and then by the knowledge that death awaited. Men jumped from the ship into lifeboats, overcrowding them, causing them to capsize. Rafts thrown over the side drifted away before anyone could get into them. Through the pandemonium, according to those present, four Army chaplains fought hope and despair in the darkness. Those chaplains were George L. Fox, a Methodist; Alexander D. Goode, a Jew; John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic; and Clark V. Poling, from a Reform Church.

Quickly and quietly, the four chaplains spread out among the soldiers. They tried to calm them, praying and speaking with them. Witnesses of the terrible night remember hearing the four men offering prayer for the dying, encouragement for those who would live, say Wyatt Fox, the son of the Reverend Fox. One witness found himself floating in the oil-smearred water surrounded by dead bodies and debris. "I could hear the men crying, pleading, praying. I could also hear the chaplains preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going." A sailor tried to reenter his cabin because he had forgotten his gloves. "Never mind," Rabbi Good said. "I've got two pair," and he took his gloves and gave them to the sailor. Later, the petty officer realized that the Rabbi did not intend to leave the ship.

By this time, most of the men who were still alive were topside. The chaplains opened the storage locker and started passing out the life jackets. It was then that an engineer, Grady Clark, witnessed an astonishing sight. When there were no more life jackets to give, the chaplains simply removed their life jackets and gave them to the next person in line. The Catholic didn't ask for another Catholic to come forward. Nor did the Rabbi ask for a Jew to come forward. Nor did either of the Protestant chaplains ask for a Baptist or a Protestant or anyone else to come forward. They just passed them to the next person in line. "This is the finest thing I have ever seen this side of heaven," said John Ladd, another survivor. The

altruistic action of the four chaplains constitutes one of the purest spiritual and ethical acts a person can make. When giving their life jackets, they simply gave them to the next man in line.

As the ship went down, the survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains arms length braced against the sinking deck and their voices could be heard offering prayers. Of the 902 men aboard the *Dorchester*, 672 died, leaving 230 survivors. When news reached the American shores, the nation was stunned by the magnitude of the tragedy and the heroic act of the four chaplains. Carl Sandburg once said valor is a gift. Those having it never know for sure until a test comes.

Ray Smith was elected the National Commander of the 2.8 million member American Legion on September the 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He became a member of The American Legion on September the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1955, the day after he was first discharged from the United States Air Force. His military service did not end there. He enlisted again for four years in the active reserves, and was honorably discharged in 1959. During his 45 years of The American Legion membership Smith has served in numerous leadership positions, including the Department Commander, National Department and District Vice Commander, Post Commander and Chairman of a number of Department positions. He has served as Post Adjutant for 20 years, and served on the Board of Directors for 24 years. A staunch advocate of veterans and their families, Smith also champions countless programs for the betterment of children and youth. He was named Woodman of the Year for the World Outstanding Citizen in the year 1983. The Benson Citizen of the Year in 1988, U.S. Postal Service Volunteer of the Year and member of the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors in 1992. He was elected Town Commissioner for 26 years. He retired from the U.S. Postal Service in 1995. Born in Johnson County, North Carolina, Smith is the seventh of eight children, and is married to the former Helen Wallace. Smith is a life member of the Banner American Legion Post No. 109 in Benson.

Commander Smith, the Chapel of the Four Chaplains is pleased to honor the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion to Ray Smith on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 2001, in recognition to your service to all people regardless of race. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation, founded upon the fatherhood of one God.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I accept this on behalf of all Legionnaires who keep alive the memory of the Four Chaplains.

At this time I'd like to recognize Chris Zimmons, Second Vice President, First National Bank of Omaha, our financial partner.

**Drawing for Certificate of Deposit  
First National Bank of Omaha  
Chris Zimmons, Second Vice President**

It is truly an honor for me to be up here today, and is truly an honor for First National Bank to be the new financial services provider for The American Legion. We are excited about the partnership and look forward to a long prosperous friendship.

For those of you who stopped by our booth this week, you know we were holding a drawing for five \$500 Certificates of Deposit, and one \$1,000 Certificate. It's time for me to announce those winners. And for those of you who were lucky of enough to win, we will be notifying you by telephone or by mail. The first five that I will list are the \$500 winners: P.J. Sambo from Redding, California, Louis Bordeau from Hot Springs, South Dakota, Willie R. Merill, Lake City, Florida, Jeff Luginbuel, Denver, Colorado and Vincent

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Calamuno, Rockaway Park, New York. And now it's time for the \$1,000 winner: William Ost, Elmont, New York.

One last thing. One of the things we think make this a great partnership is a strong belief in family values that we share with The American Legion. As a result, earlier this year we did a special promotion to benefit the National Emergency Fund. So today it is my honor and privilege to present National Commander Smith, The American Legion and the National Emergency Fund with a check for \$5,895.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you for that check. We appreciate it very much.

Since we last gathered at Convention, ground was broken for construction of the World War II Memorial, right where it belongs on the Mall in Washington, D.C. But, despite the groundbreaking ceremonies, the future of the project remained in limbo as legal bickering flared anew. Finally, Congress and the President put an end to that, and it appears that the Greatest Generation will have a memorial. With us this morning to bring us up-to-date on the Memorial and the complex issues surrounding the construction is the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Major General John Herrling, U.S. Army, retired.

**Report: Update on World War II Memorial  
Major General John P. Herrling, Retired  
Secretary, American Battle Monuments Commission**

It is always an uplifting experience to attend this Convention and to share the spirit of America's great organizations. The work that you do throughout the country, especially efforts on the behalf of veterans, deserves the thanks of all Americans.

I want to share with you today the continuing story of the World War II Memorial. My message this afternoon is a simple one, the message all of us have waited for six long years. The work on the World War II Memorial has begun.

In June, a contract was awarded to a construction company that we believe will do a first rate job in building the Memorial. On Monday of this week, the general contractor began site mobilization at the Memorial's Rainbow Pool site on the National Mall. This week, the contractor will be surveying the existing facilities and laying out his plans for the new utilities. New week, after Labor Day, the contractor will erect a security fence, move in his construction trailers, establish temporary parking and provide for erosion control of the site. If you visit the Rainbow Pool site next month, you will see the World War II Memorial under construction.

In past years, I have come to this Convention and told you that it's not a matter of if the Memorial will be built, but when. Well, no more 'whens' or no more 'maybes,' we are on the way. And we're projecting a 30-month construction process that will allow us to do the dedication of this long overdue Memorial in the spring of 2004. This beginning is long in coming. Particularly after our celebration last Veterans Day when we had the ceremonial groundbreaking at the Memorial site. Some of you were there. There was a feeling of great anticipation among the thousands of members of the World War II generation who attended. They sensed that finally the start for this Memorial was near.

Unfortunately, there was still another fight. I know some of you have closely followed the events of the past spring when we were mired in legal and administrative issues that threatened the delay of construction. It took us a while to get that mess untangled, and The American Legion helped. At the critical juncture in the history of this Memorial there was no better spokesman on the need to get the construction of the Memorial than your National

Commander, Ray Smith. Ray's editorial comments, along with a personal letter to Congress provided timely and important confirmation that the veterans of this country wanted debate to end and construction to begin. Congress shared that frustration and passed legislation directing the Memorial to be built expeditiously. President Bush signed the legislation into law on Memorial Day.

The voice of The American Legion was vital to carrying that legislation through overwhelming passage in both the House and the Senate, and I thank you again for being there when you were needed as you have done so many times before. Over the past four years The American Legion family has clearly won the gratitude of America's World War II generation. When we came looking for financial support, your organization responded in a very significant way. In pledges and donations to the campaign, The American Legion family has raised over \$4.5 million. This has been a total effort. Herm Harrington, the Chairman of the Internal Affairs Commission, and at Headquarters, Jack Querfeld and Jeff Wonder, have continued to do a superb job managing the Legion's effort on financial support.

Kris West, President for the American Legion Auxiliary, deserves special recognition for her tremendous efforts over the last two years in leading her members to far go beyond the goal that they had originally established for the Memorial.

National Commander Kevin Winkelmann and the members of the Sons of The American Legion have done their part to support this Memorial. The last time I made mention of Kevin and the Sons of The American Legion, I referred to them as the Sons of the American Revolution. Kevin, patriots all! Whether you're a son of an American revolution or the Son of The American Legion.

I won't spend a lot of time explaining the fund-raising process for this Memorial. Let me just say that to date we have raised nearly \$175 million. It took a nationwide effort to raise these funds. It was an extraordinary experience to watch the outpouring of support from across America. It has been especially gratifying to see there are so many citizens anxious to have this long overdue memorial constructed. When we finally dedicate this Memorial in 2004 it will end a long road to victory. All of you have been part of that road to victory. It was your time, your talent and your money that will make this historic Memorial reality. It will be a final victory for a remarkable generation of Americans who helped save the world and ensured our nation's freedom and democracy. It will be great day when we dedicate this Memorial, and I certainly hope all of you will be there.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I understand that some of you may have some contributions you would like to make to the World War II Memorial. If you have contributions, we would be glad to receive them at this time.

MR. CONLEY, PENNSYLVANIA: On behalf of the Department of Pennsylvania and our Immediate Past Department Commander, Terry Lewis, we would like to present to you a check in the amount of \$3,531 towards the World War II Memorial Fund.

MR. DALKE, NORTH DAKOTA: On behalf of the North Dakota Past Commander's Club and the Delegation, I have the Past National Vice Commander with me, Curt Twete, to make the donation.

PAST NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER TWETE: On an idea fostered by Past National Commander Sparky Gierke, a Past Department Commander in our Department, and perpetuated by NECman Moody Dalke, on behalf of the Past Department Commanders and the Department of North Dakota, many of which are World War II veterans—and for those of us that are not, they were our mentors—here's \$2,675 from the Past Department Commanders of the Department of North Dakota.

MR. GUNDERSON, IDAHO: Commander Ray Smith, on behalf of Idaho, the Department Delegation has an additional \$785.06, which puts us over \$100,000 with our States contribution.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The Chair recognizes Robert David of South Carolina, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Economics, for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference  
and  
Other Economic Matters  
Robert E. David, South Carolina, Chairman**

At 9:00 a.m. on August 26, 2001, a total of 78 delegates assigned to the Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Other Economic Matters convened in Room 214B of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, to consider 31 resolutions assigned to the committees for action. Robert E. David of South Carolina was elected general chairman and Albert Robotti of New Jersey was appointed general secretary. Kenneth Sercherchi of Maine was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference, and Louis Kirk of Iowa was appointed secretary. David Desmond of North Carolina was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters, and Jim Foster of Alaska was appointed secretary.

In response to a call by the National Adjutant, a screening committee consisting of Robert E. David (SC), Ken Sercherchi (ME), Bill Christoffersen (UT), Al Robotti (NJ), and David Desmond (NC), met at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 24, 2001, in the Frio Room of the Hyatt Regency San Antonio to make recommendations to the Convention Committees on Economics. The report of the screening committee was presented to the convention committees and was adopted.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to authorize the chairman and secretary to sign the committee report on behalf of the committee. A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow the chairman and secretary to make technical corrections to the report without changing the meaning. The meeting was recessed at 10:15 a.m.

**Recommended Action on Resolutions  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 25: Preserve Priority of Service to Veterans in All One Stop Centers  
Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, "Priority" has been a practice prescribed by the Department of Labor (DOL) as one means of fulfilling the mandate of Title 38 United States Code to provide veterans with the maximum of employment and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, "Priority" has been defined and practiced as "the provision of services to veterans before the provision of such services to non-veterans"; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor is moving toward a One-Stop Center operation in the states; and

WHEREAS, Once DOL awards grants to the states, the governor of each state will decide who will operate the One-Stop Centers, thus placing the policy of priority of service in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, The centers might continue with the State Employment Security Agencies, known as the Job Service, or the funding may take another direction and be operated by the counties under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) or even be sub-contracted out to private corporations; and

WHEREAS, The former JTPA was historically deaf to veterans' needs and opposed veterans' priority in most states; and

WHEREAS, If the funds are sub-contracted out to the private sector, the motivation to assist veterans with employment issues will be driven strictly by profits; and

WHEREAS, These actions will eventually lead to cutting corners and ultimately be detrimental to veterans; and

WHEREAS, Priority of service to veterans as outlined by law (Title 38, USC, and 20 CFR) will be satisfied with the federally funded service provider, no matter whom the governors select, so that each veteran or eligible is afforded the full array of services for which she or he is eligible in order to gain advantages in the labor market; and

WHEREAS, The full array of services include, but are not limited to, job search workshops; labor market information; resume development; interviewing techniques; classroom training; support services; job restructuring; job recommendations; training; career counseling; job placement; employer information; case management; skills enhancement; selective placement; job development; child care information; temporary housing; transportation assistance and discharge upgrade assistance; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the majority of these services are provided by the staff in the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs), both programs operated by the State Employment Security Agencies (SESA); and

WHEREAS, If the SESA is not the service provider the staff, including LVERs and DVOPs, stand to lose their jobs or be transitioned into the evolving system as county employees; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion affirm the practice and definition of "priority" as herein defined, and ask that such definition and practice be formally codified by the Congress in Title 38 United States Code, Chapter 41, and that the Secretary of Labor and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training require and extend the policy and practice of priority of service to all service providers in America's system of workforce development through the authority granted them under Section 4102 of Title 38 United States Code; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose federal funding for any employment service provider unless they adopt as a policy that eligible veterans receive maximum priority of the above noted services; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative staff remain state employees, that they will work within the evolving system and that they will operate and maintain services to veterans as mandated by statute; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the One-Stop Centers work with the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service to ensure the operations of the One-Stop Centers meet or exceed the federally mandated service to veterans.

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**Resolution No. 26: Make TAP Training Available to All Separating and Retiring Personnel**

**Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, At the end of the Cold War the military was drastically downsized as a way of reducing the national budget; and

WHEREAS, In an attempt to assist separating service members, including retirees, in making a successful transition back into the civilian workforce, Congress enacted Public Law 101-510; and

WHEREAS, That legislation authorized the creation of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which provides three days of comprehensive training to separatees with emphasis on such topics as how to conduct a job search; career decision-making, current occupational and labor market conditions, as well as resume and cover letter preparation; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is currently conducting a survey to assess the success of TAP in reaching its goal; and

WHEREAS, By placing veterans in suitable employment sooner, the country benefits from increased income tax revenue and reduced unemployment compensation payments thus greatly offsetting the cost of TAP training; and

WHEREAS, While commanding officers are encouraged to release their troops from duty so they can receive TAP training, many do not understand the importance of the training and thus are reluctant to comply with the result that in FY 99 only 56% of those separating from the military received TAP training; and

WHEREAS, Some commanding officers have not allowed their troops to take TAP training at least 180 days prior to discharge thus impeding the trainee's job search; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion reiterate its strong support of the Transition Assistance Program and support making it permanent and require that all service members be given an opportunity to participate in training not less than 180 days prior to their separation or retirement from the military.

**Resolution No. 27: Adequate Funding for Veterans' Employment and Training Service**

**Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veteran Preference)**

**(As amended and consolidated with 15 (MA), 19 (SD), 52 (CO), 143 (TX))**

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor, presented the Fiscal Year 2002 budget to Congress in April 2001 which will fund the various employment programs administered by the VETS; and

WHEREAS, The funding of such programs includes the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER), the Transition Assistance Program, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (One Stop) Program, new initiatives, i.e., development of Transition Assistance Programs overseas, Internet information and strengthening the relationships between federal contractors for placement of veterans into federal jobs; and

WHEREAS, The funding proposed by the VETS falls short of what The American

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Legion considers a sufficient budget to support all the programs the Department of Labor administers for veterans in need of economic and labor assistance; and

WHEREAS, The funding for the DVOP and LVER programs, due to the cost of living increases in each state, supports far fewer positions than congressionally mandated. These programs should be fully funded to the extent called for under the congressional intent; and

WHEREAS, With the implementation of the WIA, there will be an additional 2500 one-stop centers where veterans will go for employment assistance. By law, there must be 1600 fully funded LVER positions and 2000 DVOP positions. The proposed VETS funding will only support about 2400 positions annually. This is 600 staff less than necessary to provide services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, The VETS is to advocate employment programs for veterans, yet efforts have been made to transfer this program to the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has no existing employment delivery system nor does it have the necessary staff to operate such a program and the DVA would ultimately contract out these services; and

WHEREAS, The result would be to put all VETS employment staff (more than 2,500 veterans, most of whom are disabled veterans) on the unemployment rolls and the cost would exceed the current budget with low-end contractors; and

WHEREAS, The men and women who served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America are getting a clear message, "The United States does not care for its veterans;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion strongly encourage Congress and the Department of Labor to provide adequate funds to support the mission of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.

**Resolution No. 28: Support Reinvention of Veterans' Employment and Training Service**

**Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, In recent years there has been an ongoing effort to reinvent federal government by making it more effective, efficient and responsive to this country's needs; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Employment and Training Service is an agency within the Department of Labor which exists for the purpose of providing America's veterans with quality employment services; and

WHEREAS, The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training is responsible for ensuring that the agency continues to meet its mission despite increasing reluctance by Congress to fund it properly; and

WHEREAS, In response to the reinvention initiative, the Assistant Secretary appointed a Reinvention Team to analyze VETS and determine how it could restructure and streamline itself for the purpose of improving the services it provides to its veteran clients; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion fully supports the Assistant Secretary's efforts to make the agency even more responsive to the needs of the veterans it serves; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion support reorganization of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to make it more effective, efficient and



responsive to the needs of America's veterans; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support all other efforts that will improve and expand the employment assistance this country provides to former members of the Armed Forces.

**Resolution No. 30: Support Further Study of Licensure and Certification Requirements**

**Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veteran Preference)**

WHEREAS, One of the many reasons that people enter the military is to obtain job training that may be unavailable elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, Another attractive feature of military service is that it offers enlistees an opportunity to learn, develop and refine job skills; and

WHEREAS, Many men and women leave the service believing that the training and skills they acquired through military service will guarantee them a smooth transition into the civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, Service personnel are not routinely informed at the time of training that they may be required to meet licensure and certification requirements if they choose to work in the same field when they enter the civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, Because of the employment barriers created by civilian credentialing requirements, transitioning service members are often surprised to learn that the civilian labor market accepts neither their military training nor their job skills; and

WHEREAS, The inability of a transitioning service member to meet civilian credentialing requirements and standards can, among other things, delay their entry into the civilian workforce, hinder their chances for achieving their full civilian employment potential, and delay their career advancement; and

WHEREAS, A 1997 study by The American Legion identified credentialing barriers in the aircraft and health care fields; and

WHEREAS, A follow-up study by the Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance identified a total of 105 professions where military training is provided and civilian credentialing is required; and

WHEREAS, Beginning on March 1, 2001, the Montgomery GI Bill was authorized to pay up to \$2,000 for the cost of each credentialing examination for eligible service members; and

WHEREAS, The experience is thus far too new to accurately determine how well the civilian credentialing examination program will work; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill is not authorized to pay for civilian licenses or to pay for necessary preparatory course work for the credentialing examinations; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that additional studies must be conducted to determine the extent to which civilian licensure and certification requirements need expanded Montgomery GI Bill payment authorization and continue to adversely affect the military occupational specialties; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion support efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Armed Forces and the Department of Defense take appropriate steps to ensure that service members are informed about any licensure or certification they

may be required to meet when they enter the civilian workforce; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support making the Montgomery GI Bill eligibility available to pay for all necessary civilian license and certification examination requirements, including necessary preparatory courses; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress, the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor to fund a study of the effect of civilian licensure and certification requirements on all military occupational specialties identified by the study undertaken by the Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance.

**Resolution No. 31: Support Revision of Veterans' Employment and Training Service Performance Standards**

**Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, Federal law required the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) to establish performance standards for evaluating state employment services for veterans; and

WHEREAS, At a 1997 hearing before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) criticized VETS because its current performance standards focus more on process than on results; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's 1997 *Annual Report* showed that while nine states met that agency's performance standards, they placed fewer than 10 percent of veteran registrants; and

WHEREAS, A 1997 report by GAO indicated that 18 states placed fewer than one-in-five veterans who came to the Employment Service for assistance; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion finds these statistics unacceptable; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion seek and support a revision of existing Veterans' Employment and Training Service reporting requirements for measuring performance standards and for determining compliance with requirements for providing employment services to veterans.

**Resolution No. 32: The National Veterans' Training Institute**

**Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference  
(As amended))**

WHEREAS, Public Law 100-323 established the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) as the primary training center for veteran program staff and state employment security agency staff nationwide; and

WHEREAS, NVTI has provided several thousand training sessions for State Employment Security Agency staff, Veterans' Employment and Training Service staff and Department of Defense staff; and

WHEREAS, NVTI has had an immeasurable impact on the quality of services provided to the veterans of this nation by improving the level and quality of services provided, thus improving job opportunities for veterans; and

WHEREAS, The downsizing of the military, federal government, and corporate

America has increased the number of veterans who need the services of those individuals currently trained by NVTI; and

WHEREAS, Despite its proven track record NVTI has never been adequately funded; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion strongly encourage Congress and the Department of Labor to provide adequate funds to support the National Veterans' Training Institute.

**Resolution No. 33: Veterans Hiring Preference for Federal Contractors**

**Origin: UT**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, It is the intent of Congress to provide affirmative action to veterans under Section 4212, Chapter 42, 38 USC in the employment and advancement with federal contractors; and

WHEREAS, The mandated VETS 100 reports indicate that the majority of the employers covered under the section cited above have ignored or failed to implement the requirements of hiring and advancement of covered veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend the covered groups under Section 4212, Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code by removing the terms Vietnam era and special disabled and replacing with "veteran" and "special emphasis on disabled veterans."

**Resolution No. 60: Oppose the Transfer of Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs**

**Origin: MD**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veteran Preference)**

WHEREAS, Veterans' employment programs began after World War I when the U.S. Employment Service helped place returning veterans in civilian jobs; and

WHEREAS, Since 1980 the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL/VETS) has been headed by the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training; and

WHEREAS, DOL/VETS' primary responsibilities include the following:

Administering veterans' employment program grants totaling \$157 million in fiscal year 1998, that fund nearly 3,000 state employment service Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives;

Administering Job Training Partnership Act IV-C grants totaling \$7.3 million in FY 1998 and, after July 1, 2000, successor veterans' workforce investment programs. The successor programs, established by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, will serve recently separated and service-connected disabled veterans, veterans with significant barriers to employment, and veterans of a war, campaign, or expedition. WIA directs DOL/VETS to coordinate veterans' workforce investment programs with related Department of Veterans Affairs programs and activities, and authorizes not less than \$7.3 million for each FY from 1999 through 2003;

Administering homeless veterans' reintegration project grants (\$3 million) in FY 1998);

Facilitating Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops for separating service members (DOL/VETS currently authorizes states to allocate up to five percent of their

veterans' employment state grants for TAP workshop facilities and augments this allocation with a national contract for supplemental facilitation (\$1.5 million for FY 1998), as well as funding to purchase and ship TAP materials (approximately \$400,000 annually));

Monitoring veterans' preference for federal employment, in cooperation with the United States Office of Personnel Management. The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 requires that Secretary of Labor to investigate complaints of alleged violations of veterans' preference rights to federal employment and attempt to resolve them;

Supervising the listing of jobs by federal contractors and the subsequent referrals of qualified veterans;

Administering a \$2 million contract to operate the National Veterans' Training Institute, which provides training for federal and state employees involved in the direct delivery of employment and training related services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, DOL/VETS is organized with a national, seven regional, and 52 state-level offices by statute; and

WHEREAS, DOL would continue providing employment related services to non-veterans, creating a duplication of services detrimental to veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion opposes all legislative efforts to transfer the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Resolution No. 81: Remove Delimiting Date for Using the G.I. Bill**

**Origin: IL**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment Veterans Preference)**

**(As Amended)**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation, and

WHEREAS, The intent of the Veterans G.I. Bill for education is primarily to assist veterans in retraining so that they may find productive jobs, and

WHEREAS, The current delimiting date for using these benefits is ten years from separation from active duty and was decided upon in the 1940's when veterans usually held their job for life, and

WHEREAS, The current job market is such that a person will change career fields at least three times during their lifetime, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion support retaining the ten-year delimiting period for veterans to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs provide a waiver to any eligible veteran beyond the ten-year limit on a case-by-case basis.

**Resolution No. 141: Oppose Eliminating or Contracting Out of Veterans' Employment and Training Governmental Programs**

**Origin: TX**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-year history of the United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the armed forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, "to provide for the

common defense", and

WHEREAS, These men and women served the United States under the constitutional authority vested in, and by direction of the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, In Title 38, United States Code, at section 4301, the Congress expressed its purpose in enacting the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) as, "to encourage non-career service in the uniformed services by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantage to civilian careers and employment which can result from such service", and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of disabled veterans of the armed forces of the United States are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, In Title 38, United States Code, at Section 4101, "The Congress declares as its intent and purpose that there shall be an effective (1) job and job training counseling service program, (2) employment placement service program, and (3) job training placement service program for eligible veterans/disabled veterans and eligible persons....", and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by, the Congress of the United States to ensure that all veterans/disabled veterans who served the United States in uniform in time of war and peace are afforded such services in a uniform manner following completion of their service and return to the several states, and

WHEREAS, Legislation is being promoted/considered by the National Association of Workforce Administrators that will seek to eliminate federal oversight of the programs operated under Title 38, by contracting out the program and give the individual Workforce Development Boards the option of operating a veterans' program, and

WHEREAS, This legislation may also seek to delete the job descriptions of the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist and Local Veterans Employment Representative which will effectively eliminate these positions allocated to serve all veterans and promote contracting out or block granting of these funds (which are currently earmarked for veterans), to the state or local workforce development boards and,

WHEREAS, This devolution or contracting out of the DVOP and LVER program would eliminate the requirement that the individuals hired for these positions be disabled veterans or even veterans, and eliminate the funding source for these programs, and

WHEREAS, Such devolution or contracting out of program responsibility will then be based on each state's elected officials' whim and will result in either no preference or such variations in employment assistance provided veterans as will effectively nullify the intent of the Congress found in Title 38 USC, and create an unstable program subject to frequent contractor changes, supervisor and program staff changes that are now typical of the currently contracted programs, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion vigorously oppose contracting out of the DVOP and LVER program or removal of the enabling and resourcing provisions of The United States Code that provide for: (1) The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program; (2) The Local Veterans' Employment Representative Program; (3) The National Veterans Training Institute; and (4) Wagner-Peyser State Employment Service Grants.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, August 29, 2001*

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**Resolution No. 164: National Employment Service Award Recipients**

**Origin: OK**

**Submitted By: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)**

**(As Amended)**

WHEREAS, The American Legion has historically paid stipends of \$1,000.00 for the National Employer Award recipients; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion does not pay any expenses for any of the National Employment Service Award recipients; and

WHEREAS, The federal law, Title 38, United States Code, Chapters 41, 42 and 43, authorizes employment programs for veterans; and

WHEREAS, Local Veteran Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists are funded through this same federal law to provide employment services for all veterans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always supported legislation with the intent to provide meaningful benefit and employment to our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion provides National Employment Service Awards for the Local Employment Office, the Local Veteran Employment Representative and for the Disabled Veteran Employment Program Specialist; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion brings positive national recognition toward The American Legion's "Hire A Veteran" Program, for the public and employer interest, which results in increased job opportunities for veterans; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion recognize National Employment Service Award winners at The American Legion National Convention.

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 7: (MA) Employment of Veterans in Government Work Force**

**Resolution No. 16: (MA) LVER Positions to be Assigned on the Basis Required by law**

**Referred to the Standing Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)  
Commission**

**Resolution No. 18: (MA) Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA)**

**Resolution No. 34: (UT) Veterans Hiring Preference From Employers With Federal Grants**

**Resolution No. 50: (CO) Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program in Title 38**

**Resolution No. 142: (TX) Workforce Investment Act**

**Rejected**

**Resolution No. 154: (CA) Jay Hinshaw as Candidate for Veterans Employment Representative of the Year 2000**

**Committee on Other Economic Matters**

**Recommended Action on Resolutions**

**Approval****Resolution No. 12: Support the Small Business Administration****Origin: MA****Submitted By: Economic**

WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served our country is a traditional veterans' benefit that dates back to the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Benefits to veterans have always included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small business; and

WHEREAS, The military is currently in the process of downsizing, which will mean that thousands of former military personnel who have honorably served their country will be unemployed; and now therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion support the efforts of the United States Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Affairs in its initiatives to provide outreach to military personnel who may be affected by the downsizing of the military; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation that would permit the Office of Veterans' Affairs of the United States Small Business Administration to enter into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements to further its outreach goals.

**Resolution No. 14: Help for Veteran Owned Businesses****Origin: MA****Submitted By: Economic**

WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served our country is a veteran's benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Benefits to veterans have always included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That The American Legion strongly encourages the Congress of the United States to require a reasonable set-aside of federal procurements and contracts for businesses owned and operated by veterans and for those veteran businesses affected by base closings and reduction in our military forces.

**Resolution No. 35: Home Loan Guaranty Program****Origin: UT****Submitted By: Economic**

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program has been in effect since 1944; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program has afforded approximately 17 million veterans the opportunity to purchase homes; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program offers veterans a centralized, affordable and accessible method of purchasing homes in return for their service to our nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Antonio, Texas, August 28, 29, 30, 2001, That the Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty limit be raised to at least \$250,000, and also be geographically adjusted as

